

THE TRAGEDY OF BAIKIE. By H. K.

CHAPTER I. SIR RAOUL AND LADY DOVACH.



THE time was dim and dark in the distance when Christianity was in its tender youth and indulged in the gallant romance of the Crusades. The place is one rich now in history and tradition, rich in legends as the broad dim strath is bountiful in woods and corn, and wild and strange in story as its dens are dreary in their heathy solitudes, and its linns black cauldrons of horror.

But the time was not come: the Laird of Craig had not murdered his man and seen the Evil One leaping and grinning from his lurking-place in the cave by the Reeky Linn. The brave, bold matron had not stood faithful to her trust on "the hie castle wa'," and, in the name of her absent husband, defied "Argyle and a' his men," and his cannon planted on the brae across the water, and made to play on her fortress till it was a shattered shell, and afterwards lain down "to doo" at the Kames of Airlie, where the smoke of

the burning of hearth and roof-tree was carried to her by the cruel wind. Even Lady Dorothy had not loaded and fired the arquebuss, through the loophole in the gateway meeting the portcullis, at the wild Highland caterans. The lament had not been uttered over "the gracious gude Lord Ogilvie," fallen at Harlaw; nor the great sword of Deuchar of Deuchar carried back, but not loosed from his grasp, by the squire who hacked off his strong right hand as it lay clenching the hilt by his side in the ranks of Saxon and Celtic dead, and brought it home as a token to his lady, sitting watching in her chamber. Only the ambitious learned Knights Templars held the lands of Templeton, and men already muttered darkly, and women whispered with white lips, how Gilchrist Lord of Angus had stabbed to the heart his false wife, the sister of a king, and her blood was washed out by the pure water trickling from the cold well, where the sun's rays never fell

beneath the rocks and ashes and elms of the Castle of Mains.

The land was lonely hill-side or thicket, with patches of coarse grain and pastures for beeves round the baronial or knightly tower, the sacred abbey or the little hamlet cowering meekly in the shadow of its great neighbours, the powers temporal and spiritual. The wild beasts—boar and wolf, hart and coney—abounded in a state of nature, or exceeded nature; for, down by the Nine-stane-rig, the huge green dragon, spewing smoke and spitting fire, devoured at one fell meal the nine fair daughters of the hynd of Durward of the Catscleugh.

On a bend of the Isla, where the silver water ran round a fringed promontory and productive haughs stretched right and left, rose the turrets of Baikie. The house was strong in site and strong in architecture—a battlemented, rugged, red sandstone building, with gateway and watch-tower, court and causeway, and moat filled with oozing mud, clayey stagnant water and dank plants, and fed by springs from the clear flowing river. And Baikie was trebled in strength by the character of its master. No feudal chief far or near was feared and followed like Sir Raoul. Bold, daring, fierce; lord of these acres, lord of his vassals, unaccountable save to God and his patron saint; engaged once in his life in a crusade against the infidel, buying immunity for all crime, for sacrilege itself, by mowing down the turbaned heads, as the reaper cuts the bearded ears in the golden September; losing every grain of scruple and every note of softness in the fulfilment of the vow—the performance of the sacrifice. It is a strain to a poor, modest, disciplined, modern mind to measure Sir Raoul in the plenitude of his might and the boundlessness of his will, to balance the mountain of his temptations, the meagreness of his lessons, the guilt of his soul.

In his own day, Sir Raoul was hated, feared, and half-worshipped with a dread admiration; rude in health, in the prime of his age, no belted earl or crowned prince ventured to control him on his own ground. There he ruled paramount: there he dispensed justice; there he took a life or a score of lives—or restored a stolen quey-calf or a silver-hooped quaih. Where his own passions were not concerned, he must have evinced a stern sort of truthfulness as well as an unflinching determination, for no man despised him, though many cursed his name, and if you search into antiquity, and trace cause and effect, you will find that the liar on the throne does not need to be a coward in order to be withered by the breath of men's scorn. Sir Raoul's own people, his soldiers in battle, his yeomen in peace, his servants—if you except the black boy Mahound—cherished a certain pride in Sir Raoul. They were proud of his invincibleness; they were proud of his prowess; they were, in their own humble submission, quite capable of crowing over the abject quailing of their enemies—the bands of feudal rivals, the grim, ragged robbers descending from the snowy Grampians, the black Danes still landing on the coast, the presumptuous priest who questioned whether service against the Moor should continually atone for neglected shrine, invaded

sanctuary, and plundered treasure. His people had a grisly glory in Sir Raoul's feats with the cross-bow and the broad-sword, in his fencing and wrestling, his hunting and fowling, in the fleetness of his foot, "the prance of his proud steed," "the stroke of his oar," even in his cursing over the spiced cup in the morning, and his trolling over the wassail-bowl at night. They had a trembling pleasure in his big, fair, formidable, stately, splendid person, where, when he was in full armour, barbaric steel and gold and pearls and rubies met. The morion and the breast-plate, the thigh-pieces and the armlets flashed white or glowed in ruddy light. There was a string of fairer beads than ever father told around his brawny throat, and hanging down on his breast, and on his signet-ring and the scabbard of his sword and the clasp of his bonnet, when he laid aside his helmet and sat in his hall, jewels, crimson as drops of Cyprus wine, flickered and gleamed. An open, imperious, dauntless face was Sir Raoul's, with the sanguine yellow beard, the eagle nose, the eagle eye, and (Heaven help them!) some fancied that the strong mouth—which had a trick of opening to grind the white sharp teeth—was not without a semblance of the eagle's beak. But the brave bold face was worn with passion, and the grey eyes were hollow with unsatisfied desire. It was inevitable with the man, a hero in his instincts and a tyrant in his practices, and circumstances brought it cunningly home. Sir Raoul of Baikie, unchallenged and unopposed as far as the eye could travel, over wood and water, moor and mountain, was thwarted at his heart's core, and pining with singular unrest. There was one soul within the land, the barony, the tower, the marriage chamber, that owned no allegiance to Sir Raoul: despot over all besides, he had craved favour in that quarter, and craved in vain.

The Lord his Maker, and Sir Raoul knew how he had won Lady Dovach—won! how he had stormed, seized, bound, but not bent her, though she was the palest, most fragile thing of earth, air, or water; the lily in the shaded, gloomy, built-in garden, looked more erect, more stubborn, more staunch.

Dovach had been the sole child of a laird, whose lands marched with Baikie—a moderate man, who had said neither yea nor nay to the blustering of Sir Raoul. Dovach had grown up in those primitive days, in a rough, motherless solitude, a white, quiet, still girl with features like chiselled marble and eyes, also, like the deep, cool, fathomless, but intent eyes of a saint in a picture from beyond the seas; like those of the figures in the altar-piece of the little kirk of Foulis, yonder, where a sinful man might contemplate the Crucifixion, the dying Saviour, the thieves, Herod with his crown and sceptre, the high-priest in his mitre and bearing the roll of the law, the Roman centurion brandishing his sword, the Apostles and the women, all the persons, great and small—the very devils and angels waiting on the dead. Ninety-nine impetuous, arrogant men of war would have recoiled from Dovach, or brushed by her as if she had indeed been a sculptured or limned image; the hundredth might have run mad for her unearthly, spiritual charms,

as Sir Raoul did, after he had once beheld her walking in the gloomy fir-wood, and singing and smiling to herself as she passed by.

To give the devil and Sir Raoul their due, he sought her first peacefully of her father, and it was only when she was civilly denied him, having been contracted in her cradle to an orphan cousin, reared with her in her father's house, that Sir Raoul brought his peculiar forces to the charge, summoned horse, and sounded trumpet, and as the Wolf of Badenoch sat down with his clan, and starved and scared out the Countess of Mar in Kildrummie, so Sir Raoul without the smallest ceremony, invested his future father-in-law in his hold, and in coat of mail, and with gauntleted hand and spear in rest, bade him deliver up his young daughter, or perish in the adverse contest. It was no jesting matter, when lion-like, Sir Raouls inclined to roe-like Dovachs grazing on adjoining pastures.

Dovach's father, a taciturn, gentle man of his era, was, nevertheless, resolute in bearing the brunt of his contumacy, and with moral courage defended himself as stoutly as the hottest and most brutal, and was slain at last leading a desperate sally through the sheds and outhouses with his daughter behind him, on his white horse. Some said it was Sir Raoul's lance that pierced the harness somewhat rusty and disused, but it were hard to tell who dealt the fatal blows in the mêlée, though without doubt it was Sir Raoul's gripe that arrested the flight of the old white horse, stiff as its master, but good blood in case of need, and pulled down the fainting girl, and carried her, lying so still, on his panting breast, of all places, into the small chapel, which his simple engines had half unroofed. Two days before, the cousin had been struck below the arm by an arrow on the wall. He was a still lad, like all Dovach's race—the word went that she was indifferent to his unobtrusive regard, alighted his patient devotion; but she laboured all the same to pluck the arrow from his wound—that night, when the summer thunder and lightning were rolling and flashing over the host at the gate, and the sore-pressed company within—she held her hand on his heart long after it had ceased to beat; then she washed the body fair and clean, and smoothed the hair, soft and silken as her own, and commanded the priest, praying for the beleaguered family in their extremity, to forbear, and leaving the living to care for themselves, go sing masses for one departed soul, all through the night watches to the pearly dawn rising over the crumbling ruin and the blood-stains. That young body was not placed, like the laird's, in honourable state before the altar in the chapel, it was thrown with the herd to choke up the draw-well ere the conquerors quitted the dismantled building, but Dovach saw it as plain as the sun above her, lying beside the corpse of her gray-headed father, and close to the bier where she stood, while the faltering priest hastily blessed her and her true bridegroom.

There was frozen, unheeding death present at these nuptials. There was a splash of blood upon the shaken wall, a pool of blood on the floor, where the wounded men had lain to confess and be assoilized, blood half-dried on the bridegroom's mailed

feet, and half-wiped from his sword, blood on which she was fain to look with a fascinated gaze, on the very kirtle of the bride; but lightly would Sir Raoul have recked of these mischances had Dovach's eyes been less stony, or her hand less cold. Dovach knelt of her own will, and spoke the responses with a free tongue, as her dead father would have had her, lest a worse thing should befall her. Sir Raoul carried her away that very night, his wedded wife, in triumph to his strong tower of Baikie, rising secure and prosperous by the glittering Isla water—lit up by the last sun-rays come out after the storm of yesterday, and gladdening a refreshed and blooming world—a wide contrast to the devastation and the silence, the degradation and decay they had left behind them.

Now, Sir Raoul said, she was all his own; soon would he teach her to forget her father's desolate house, soon she would turn to him for companionship and caresses. Sir Raoul of Baikie had wooed as became him, he might not "sue with the deer." If he had rendered her fatherless, he could swear like Richard Crookback, in generations to come, "'twas thy heavenly face that set me on," and Dovach like poor, smitten, unstable Anne, would cry, and cover that face, and geck, and blush, and credit, and forgive him, because, you know, it was her face that was to blame, after all. But still remained Dovach, as when she lay like lead on his heaving corslet, and she foiled him by her very frailty. Yet she was not really frail—there is a mock, bullying courage, and there is true valour, let it vaunt with the dark Gascon, or rest mute and phlegmatic with the sandy-haired German; and there is veritable weakness in flippant forwardness, brazen audacity, raging fury, while there may be no feebleness in the slight woman who holds down the convulsed child—her heart's darling, or tends the agonised man—the desire of her eyes, or stands on the deck of the wrecked ship, or once walked upon the scaffold with trembling limbs and quivering voice indeed, but as resolute to die for the truth, as any bull-necked, broad-fisted champion of error. Sir Raoul swore in wrath and mortification that these timid, undemonstrative tempers have no marrow for *dourness*; that he could have tamed a vixen, and silenced a shrew, and taught her to come to his hand in a week, or a month, but this fine, shy, subtle nature baffled him. Perhaps he was right; these frank, outspoken, coarser constitutions receive at the best caricatured, loose impressions, and give and take them perpetually. They express their very essence, and have done with it, borrowing the style and character of the next scene, circumstances, individuals, with whom they come in contact. Once the wrong is played out, these boisterous, fresh, not untrue for the time frames, bound as readily to the inflicter of the injury, as to any other. A lively, brawling woman, tearing her hair, and kept by force from laying violent hands on Sir Raoul, might have accepted her spouse in room of father and kinsman, and kissed him heartily, before the year was out—blotting out all his cruelties, identifying herself with his pettiest interests, serving him, cherishing him, perhaps taming him in the end, with a simplicity and a submission that God forbid any man should scorn.

But Dovach's was a shrinking, intact, adhesive

spirit, difficult as a wild bird to catch ; once arrested and fixed, faithful to immortality. Think of such a fine, delicate, yet enduring thing, like the nervous tissue resisting to the point of dissolution, unstrengthened, unhardened by early training, accustomed always to feed upon itself as she sat at her loom, or strayed across the wilds, thus snatched and wrung, filled with sights of horror, sounds of anguish, and then in the madness of ignorance, expected and required to be charmed (half-coaxed, half-cowed), into speedy inconstancy, contentment, cheer.

And like the nervous tissue Dovach was goaded into false activity ; the quiet, pale girl learnt to oppose and disobey the conqueror ; the cool, deep eyes flamed, the mild tongue bit and stung until the white child seemed fiend-possessed.

It was only to Sir Raoul that the unhappy lady thus broke forth ; to the followers over whom her evil fortune had made her mistress she was passive and gentle ; and of her own accord she would have woven and read her missal, and paced the battlements, pondering morbidly her misery and sin as mechanically as any nun within her cloisters.

But Sir Raoul could not let Lady Dovach alone. Sometimes he abased himself, and prayed and vowed at her feet ; sometimes he raged, and threatened, and oppressed, and abused her ; but surely it was grievous retribution to him to love her as he continued to do, for different as light and darkness, the iron was to the full indestructible as the gossamer—loving her, devoured with love for her, grasping her, he could no more possess her spirit, subdue her will, receive one fond look, thrill to one kind touch, hearken to one gracious word, drink and have his thirst slaked, eat and find his hunger appeased, than if she were a saint enthroned in the unattainable skies, or a demon plunged into the fathomless deeps. Baikie with its high turrets, its vigilantly guarded haughs, its store-houses, its droves of cattle, its merry men, its Isla gliding gaily to its own sweet song, its bower in the centre of the castle where pale Dovach sat undreaming of escape save by slow death, was a place of torment to Sir Raoul.

(To be continued.)

THE TRAGEDY OF BAIKIE. By H. K.

CHAPTER II. THE DEMON AND THE DOOM OF BAIKIE.



MANY an old Scottish house has its lingering myth of its Brownie or shape of "ill" haunting the home of some wretched wizard laird like hapless Sir Thomas or great Michael Scott, and after the example of the rough hairy dog treading on the footsteps of Major Weir, or of the great grey-eyed cat eating bodily the Aberdonian Master. Wise folks pretend to discover in these figments the rough descriptions of highly educated native, or curious foreign animals which astonished the faculties and imposed upon the credulity of the vulgar. They may be right; Brownies may be monkeys after all, and bristling accomplished dogs and vicious cats early Sir Isaacs and special modifications of the tiger; because in sooth the demon of Baikie was nothing worse than Sir Raoul's Moorish boy, trophy of his passage of arms against the infidel, named Mahound, kicked and cuffed to atone for the unrighteous mercy which had spared the one life and brought the lad to the north country for a jest,

and a horror to Sir Raoul's obtuse, superstitious neighbours.

All the little world of Baikie certainly believed Mahound no better than he should be, though freely allowing for the extremely low standard of slave, black-a-moor, paynim. Possibly Sir Raoul was not without a shade of the same appalling faith, and buffeted Mahound on principle—since he had his principles—those of his age, class, and character. Mahound's tribulations, though they were legion and hideous to chronicle, were by no means undeserved. This lad growing to man's estate was neither noble, chivalrous Saracen, nor brutish, fatuous negro: he sprung from some tribe in the interior, and he was malignant, cunning, base, and revengeful to excess. His tawny skin, blue-white eyeballs, broad, distended nose, wide mouth, spiteful snarl and sneer, his very outlandish turban, to his compulsory acquaintances most expressly typified wickedness.

He was incessantly in mischief and strife, from which he would have barely escaped even under the powerful protection of Sir Raoul, who did not choose that any other than himself should dispose of his varlet, but for the chill inaction imposed upon Mahound's comrades by his doubtful origin. What if the Devil were his progenitor? Then no advantage could follow the use of earthly weapons; nay, the fellow who took the initiative might have the awful prospect of a combat with Satan super-added to the aggravations of Mahound.

One would think Sir Raoul had discord enough in his hall, without maintaining this full-grown map among his men-at-arms; but Sir Raoul was perverse and dogged, even supposing the question did not resolve itself, like that of modern slaves, into the complete and ominous obscurity veiling the future position of Mahound, if his unfortunate master did consent to let him go. Sir Raoul pushed himself: his instinctive truth and downright fire revolted at the vileness of Mahound's frauds and atrocities. There was no love lost between master and man. Mahound did his duty by Raoul, but he did it sullenly; and Sir Raoul maltreated him in a long course of reckless outrages, deepening in affront and barbarity as his Lady Dovach testified some pity for the abhorred and shunned wretch.

This pity of Dovach's was the most transparent thing in the world, scarcely hiding her own aversion to the victim. Both Sir Raoul and Mahound knew its extent; but in the knight's resentment that she, who would not deign to extend to him the faintest hope of relenting, or better far—oblivion, should show the least charity to another, he persecuted his black slave more intentionally and more hatefully; and Dovach, perceiving his vexation, was more distinctly and deliberately humane to the inhuman object of contention. Oh, miserable pair! rushing away from the one star in their darkness.

The abbot at Brechin feasted his lay-brethren and entertained his children with a miracle play. The diversion was welcomed with gaping relish, and the half-starved bondsmen, uncertain of their lives an hour beyond their chief's pleasure, flocked in masses to be fed like hogs, and laugh as donkeys bray, for one blessed day's intermission in the toils and cares and monotony of their lives.

For some reason of policy, or pride or good humour, Sir Raoul vouchsafed to his whole household generous leave of absence for the entire summer's day, and dispatched them betimes, under the guidance of his younger brother, to hour bulk in the festivities. Sir Raoul himself chose to tarry at home, as the Lady Dovach, weak and spiritless, kept her chamber; and at the last moment, for some shadow of an excuse, he commanded Mahound, scourging him like a dog, and confining him in a den. But all the others, of every degree—senechal, chaplain, bower-women, cook, scullion, groom—departed joyfully, facing round in the rosy morning to do low obeisance to the last glimpse of Sir Raoul in his supreme pomp and dignity, none divining that they could behold him otherwise than with honour and envy.

Sir Raoul fed his horses, dogs, and falcons with his own hands; stalked about among his armour

and antlers until he found a fishing-rod, crossed the low bridge, and proceeded to wile away his lazy leisure by fishing in the Isla opposite his house of Baikie.

The day was cloudless and brilliant, so that one could watch the sparrow-hawk a black mote to the verge of the horizon, unlike that lowering, electric atmosphere of flashing torrents and brief sunshine when he brought home Dovach. Brought her home! nay, committed his prisoner to gyves and chains and sure ward. The sand-martins were twittering and fluttering from bank to bank; shoals of minnows rendered the waters alive; plumes of tufted, almond-scented meadow queen nodded in the breeze, the white water-ranunculus floated dreamily, like miniature water-lilies, in broad patches on the stream; and the long green fleshy ribs of the river-grass barred it from side to side. But that great, powerful, passionate Sir Raoul, in doublet and sword-belt, with hunting-knife and bugle-horn, heeded the soft beauty of the little spot of earth as little as the kine that dropped down to drink of the water of the Isla. He felt the unusual silence and idleness: no mower whetting his scythe, no herdsman whistling in his dog, no straying children: it oppressed him, though it did not cross his imagination that these brooding pauses in ordinary life (so wholesome are stir and labour) have been now and again seized upon for the accomplishment of ghastly visions, the perpetration of horrid crimes.

Sir Raoul tired of his sport, and sat among the rushes, crushing the brittle reeds in his fervent grasp,—crushing a little, light, shyest of the shy, sky-blue butterfly among them. He pondered on the bitterness of his lot, the lovelessness where he sought love, the parched dryness of that fountain. Oh, for one drop of nectar for him from this pale, protesting girl, an avenging spirit in his arms! Madness! Seek ruddy, buxom, reasonable, earthly women, and expect returning regard from them: leave this captious, intolerant being to mope away in her unity and defiance. But he could not give her up: he raged, and fumed, and sickened desperately at the idea. No, though he recollected with a double pang a little rosy girl he had loved long, long ago,—loved in utter carelessness,—who had fluttered joyously at his approach, and lamented drearily at his departure. O Dovach, unwomanly woman, never to be consoled, won truly, but unwooed, unwooed! What had become of the silly little girl? He had not stayed to ask before; some other occupation had intervened; a report of found treasure; the first enlistment in the raid against the Crescent for the good of his soul; a quarrel with Sir Niel, or Ramsay, or Wedderburn: and her father had removed her, he knew not where; he never asked. She had ceased to hold him, and what did it matter now? O Dovach, Dovach! surely she traded upon his fears, surely she made much of her drooping and decline! She would not waste away, she would not die. Dying, would she relent at last,—pity him, be friends with him in the hour of release? Dying! folly! He would ride and run, send the priests and the wise woman to hunt out witch-hazel, hart's tongue, ground ivy, pluck the blade under the propitious planet,

gather the blossom dank and heavy with precious dew : if that failed, procure by gold or the sword the mystic chalcedony, the onyx, the blood-stone. Tempestuous as were Sir Raoul's thoughts, he was little used to the inaction of this hot, glaring noon, and so he soon sank down drowsily, his long limbs among the dragon-flies, the flags, and the yellow irises, his fretting cares resolving themselves into troublous dreams.

Suddenly Sir Raoul's slumber was broken by a sound such as he had never heard in this lower world. Was it flitting fancy still? or could it have been Dovach's voice, not formally—not in tones sharp as steel—but beseeching, confiding, in their agony,—“O! Raoul, Raoul! where are you?” They wailed “Raoul!” they cried, “Come!”

Sir Raoul started up with his eyes straining from their sockets, his brown cheeks blistering, not so much with the beating sun, as with the boiling passion of that mania. Peaceful stood the red walls of Baikie, no foe apprised of its desertion clamouring at its gate, Sir Raoul's banner planted on the topmost pinnacle hanging motionless. It must have been a delusion. But hark! again “Raoul, Raoul!” close at hand, right across the river from the turret window—his lady's window. And wist you what Sir Raoul felt? Let who will talk of horrors! when Mahound's black, foul face, which he had left caged in darkness, appeared at the open casement, thrust out, leering round, then withdrawn for a second, to return in company with a white burden struggling with him, which he pushed through the aperture and poised high in dizzy air over the castle moat.

Sir Raoul had stood dumb, but he broke the spell with a wrench such as a man employs to tear himself from the night-hag, Mara. “Monster! Fiend!” he shrieked, “hold back!”

Mahound was arrested in his aim; he recognised his master's presence, but it was only to fling back his head with a bitter laugh and shout in reply: “I thought to have given you a surprise, Sir Raoul; I did not hope to have you for a witness. Ho! ho! Now was not I as canny as any of your favourites, to discern that the loss of ring, or beaker, or bird, would plague you less than the want of your blooming lady, whom you banned out of your sight yestreen? One heave, and she goes, Sir Raoul! Who is the dog—the worm—the accursed, beastly Moor, to-day?”

Sir Raoul was down on his knees. “Mahound, what will it profit you? I will set you free, make you rich, to the half of my land, knave. I swear it by the Rood.”

“What! share alike with you, Sir Raoul? But your heartstrings saved! No, my fine lord; find another price for my withdrawal!”

“The whole lands, then, Mahound, villain, or my life! my life! I will pluck out my heart, if you will not avenge yourself on her who took your part, you venomous asp, nay, Mahound, Mahound!”

“You spare the ill names, now, Sir Raoul! Nothing but Mahound, Mahound. You might have been a siccarrer man this day, if you had given me a more Christian-like title. They told me it was your devil, and your devil I'll be, my master. Her

mercy, quotha! I know what it came to, I know and you know, how madam bridled and drew in her skirts; it was but to thwart her master, Sir Raoul. Ha, ha! she and I are not so far apart. Bid your blythe lady farewell, Sir Raoul.”

“Oh! man, mortal, if you be not the arch-fiend I mocked, is there no ransom? Can I pay none that will abet your own love of life; for you know, Mahound, you will die within twelve hours for this deed; it is hopeless to think of escape, you will die inch by inch, as surely as you will burn in hell.”

“What care I for the life that you rendered worse than the cat's, that, poor beast! has nine lives, or yon corbie's, which, unhappy bird! outlasts a hundred years. Your hell is not my hell. Bid your bonny wife farewell, Sir Raoul; they do say she was laith to come, but, by my word, she is laith, too, to go.”

“Is there nothing in the wide universe you will take—heavens fall and cover her! Christ come down and sain her!” groans Sir Raoul, with the big sweat-drops hailing from his brow.

“Stay,” cries Mahound, mowing and capering. “You said my skin was black, Sir Raoul, as if your boot had stamped the dye, and my nose flat, as if your sword had pommelled it, and my mouth slit and laid over, as if your dagger had cut and spread it. Make me a gift of your red and brown skin, master, your high nose, your arched mouth—fling them to me across the water, Sir Raoul, and your pinging dame may remain scatheless for me.”

Sir Raoul had gripped his hanger all these terrible moments—he did not hesitate a second, he lifted his hand against himself, and the blow came down shearing to the bone.

Oh! mighty love which many waters could not quench, stronger than death, deeper than the grave, refusing not that pain, indignity, and shame. Blinded and faint in his agony, Sir Raoul heard again that voice which had hailed him thus once before, and once only, it penetrated his throbbing brain, it dulled the torment, the rage, the humiliation, it thrilled him with delight and bliss. She saw his hand raised with her dying eyes, she knew what he, the man of blood, would do for her—that which pale death itself. She awoke to one of these great hidden truths near every one of us, she cried piteously with her last breath:

“Raoul, my Raoul, let me go, spare yourself.”

“Oh! that strange sweet rapture filled his veins, it shivered through him, it affected him like witchcraft, it raised the very hairs of his head like inspiration.

“Well done!” jeers Mahound, “but I've thought better of my bargain.”

“My Raoul,” the knight hears alone, sinking down on the grass.

A scream, a rush, a splash, the bubble of foam bells on the dull, slimy moat, and the white waif is gone for ever!

“My Raoul!” is whispered in the ringing ears of the Laird of Baikie, as he closes his eyes by the bright sparkling stream.

But Sir Raoul recovers, stiff, sore, and strange: sunshine and silence, the firm castle walls, the restless Isla water, an open empty window, before him. He comprehends with an awful shock; he waits a moment; he crawls along,

as other poor victims have done after him ; he sees the weeds on the moat broken and streaked as the Northern lights in a winter sky ; and down in the thick obscurity something white—dimly discernible. He stays another dreary interval, summoning back his ebbcd strength, and plunges in and drags out, he knows not how, a dripping, disordered woman's figure, dead—dead ! the pale-face marble verily now, the deep eyes glassy and glazed. He lies down beside her on the turf where he is lord, and has not prevented her cruel murder ; but in his despair an angel looks down on him, and murmurs again, weakly and fondly, " My Raoul, spare yourself ! "

Yea, Sir Raoul never ceases to hear these words during the whole of his future pilgrimage and warfare : he never loses them in the utmost temptation and trial. He listens to them even when the demon Mahound is dragged before him ; and amidst the furious clamour he bids them have " a life for life," without pincers, or red-hot irons,

or flaying knives. He seems to be answering them when he rides abroad once more, and his wistful eyes look over his mask and appeal to those who were wont to gaze upon him in admiration and covetousness,—who stare stealthily in wonder and vague regret now,—appeal half haughtily and fiercely, half eagerly and tenderly, " You see me disfigured and mutilated in vain, for her who in life could not forgive me, but who in death declared herself mine. I do not grudge it for Dovach."

Sir Raoul might be less dreaded, bearing the sad marks of his love, but more clave unto him ; for, inexplicable as it was to many, he was a more sober-minded and merciful man after his misfortune than before it. Heaven grant that we too, like this wild, lawless Sir Raoul, may show ourselves purged and purified by adversity ; that our chronicler may have reason to quote of us what was indited of Job : " The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning."

THE RETURN OF THE FIREFLY.

"We're into port at last, Fred, we've pass'd the harbour bar,
I see the vane upon the spire blaze like a fiery star.
The town's in sight, I see the cliffs, the very torrent's track,
And the windows at St. Arthur's flashing all the sunlight back.

"Fred, rouse your heart for this, man! just think of mother's joy,
And of our dear blind father's pride in you, his youngest boy.
Fancy how madcap Mary in a breath will laugh and
And, more than all, how one you know will greet you
by and by.



"Nay, never look so white, man: remember when we lay
Becalmed for five long days and nights in Trinidad's bay.
You said 'twould bring back life and strength to heart
and arm once more,
Could you but feel the wind that breath'd along our
own old shore.

"And now 'tis here: I smell the thyme and broom
from off the down,
I see the yellow gorse that girds the hilltop like a crown.
I cannot blame your weakness, boy, my tears could
almost flow,
To think of nearing all we left three weary years ago.

"I'm sure they're thinking of us now with anxious
hearts at home,
I want me they've heard long since the gallant Fire-
fly's come;
And little Mary will have been, a hundred times
[on the quay.
through Walter's glass, and watching

"We'll not be half an hour at home ere Katie will be
there,
Blushing like any half-blown rose, as modest as she's
fair.
What! not a word or smile at that? as if I did not
For whom you've bought the shawl and wreath you've
safely stowed below.

"Huzza! we're come to anchor; I see the steamers'
smoke;
A little time, and we shall sit amid our own dear folk.
Come let me help you up, Fred, by this you're rested
well."
But the cheery words and loving voice on heedless senses
[fell.

The sailor boy lay dead and cold upon the sunny deck,
A little lock of golden hair hung from his bended neck.
'Twas just as well—he ne'er could know that on his
Katie's breast
Another's child look'd up and smiled before it sank to
rest.
A. M.

THE PYTHAGOREAN. (A TALE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.)

"Who shall deliver me from *this body of death*?"—ST. PAUL.

"I would, Father Claudius, that thou wouldst come and give the consolation of thy faith to my daughter: she lieth sick of fever, and is ill at ease till thou come."

"Who art thou? I know not thy face as one of my hearers."

"Thou dost not—yet is my daughter one of thy flock. She hath heard thee at the house of Servius the goldsmith, and desireth strongly to see thee now. Come quickly, I pray you, therefore."

"Is thy daughter fair, with azure eyes—her name Virginia?"

"Right, holy father, the same. Thou didst but three sabbaths since bless her in the name of thy God, as thou didst leave the goldsmith's house."

"Virginia! fair!—her eyes! Is she near to death?"

"A few turnings of the glass, and her soul will be in Hades, and the white roses will crown her. Haste thee, good father!"

"I cannot come, alas! I cannot come!" said the old grey-bearded man addressed as Father Claudius. "I cannot come," he added, with increasing vehemence of manner: "No, no! I cannot."

"But, father, she is of thine own; she but lately wished to join thy sect of the Nazarenes, or Christians—I know not what ye are called."

"She was a good child. I do remember her well: and yet I cannot come. I will give thee this tablet for her, let her read it; it will take my place." He took the stylus, and wrote in a waxed tablet some few lines indicative of his own faith, and calculated to restore her confidence in her religion. "Say to her, I send her the blessing of God, the Three in One. Still I cannot go with thee! No, no! I cannot!" And the old man sat down in his seat, exhausted by some internal struggle, while large tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks.

"Father Claudius," said the man, rendered



desperate, "I warn thee, that if thou comest not with me, I will tell to the Church that which thou hast refused to do, and they shall judge betwixt us. What will the child judge of thy high-sounding words of self-denial, seeing it is but eight furlongs hence, and thou wilt not go?"

"I tell thee—Thy name?"

"Fabulus."

"I tell thee, Fabulus, that I would go with thee ten times the length, but for—no, no, I cannot see thy daughter die! Virginia! no, no, not again—I *will* not see her die," he added, with fiercer tones. "Pardon an old man, I meant not anger; still I cannot go. I cannot go. Go in peace with the tablet;

hasten, lest her sight grow dim."

"Father Claudius, fare thee well, thou shalt surely hear more of this matter before long."

The old man bowed his head, and murmured, regretfully, "No, I cannot see her die!—not again, not again!"

Some seven days after the departing of Fabulus, there might have been seen moving slowly towards the house of Claudius three persons: one was Fabulus, the others the elders or deacons of the Church meeting at the house of Servius, of which Claudius was the chief minister.

"I tell ye," said Fabulus, "he did refuse."

"How?"

"With seeming regret and reluctance, 'tis true; but he did refuse."

"That is not all," said one of the others, "he doth refuse to partake of our feasts—to eat with us."

"He should give good reason for that which he does, otherwise we shall have reproach amongst the Churches, if not reproof."

They came to the house, and found the old man strangely altered since they had heard him on the intervening sabbath. His eyes were more sunken and bloodshot. The holy calm that had been

chief characteristic was gone, and in its place a nervous, excited manner painful to witness.

"Welcome, Fabulus: welcome, Hermas and Aquila. Peace be with ye!"

He set before them fruits, drinking cups, and a vase of water.

"We are come," said Hermas, the elder of the deacons, "to inquire of thee why thou differest



[See p. 101.]

from other preachers of Christus of whom we have heard? Thou eatest not with us, neither dost thou visit our sick."

"Tis false! Did not I, when the fierce ungodly mob stoned Lepidus, the slave of the armourer of the River Street,—did not I visit him? Did not these arms support his dying head—these garments wipe from his bleeding mouth the foam of death? Did not these lips speak to him of Christus and the future world; these hands, were they not lifted up to Heaven in prayer for his departing soul?—'tis false—most false. Did I not eat with one—with all of ye—when ye gathered your children at the house of Servius, at the time of fruits? Ye know these things, yet ye say I visit not your sick—I eat not with ye; even now I eat with ye, see——" And the old man seized an apple from the board, and ate eagerly.

"But still, Father Claudius, thou dost not feast with us. Though thou hast ministered unto us these three years, thou hast not once feasted at our houses,—our marriages thou dost not come to,

our birth rejoicings know not thy presence, and Fabulus, here, will witness that, but seven days since, he did, with tears, entreat thee to visit his dying daughter, and thou wouldst not. These things are strange, and will bring us reproach amongst the Churches."

"Tis true!" said the old man, now excited beyond endurance, "tis true! but drive me not away from among ye, for that I will not eat of your feasts nor see your daughters die. Brethren, I have suffered much. Ye know, that when first I came to ye, I told you of my life, how that I could not tell you of my youth, but showed you letters from the Churches of Jerusalem, of Macedonia, of Galatia, and others, making known to ye that for the last thirty years I had taught the faith in all lands. I told ye then that in my youth I was as one of the world, and when ye asked how came I to know and believe in Christus, I could not tell ye then, but now, lest ye drive me from ye, I *must*. I had hoped to have ended my days amongst ye in peace—to have carried my sorrows to the grave

alone. Ye will share them ; the burden is heavy ; 'tis of your own seeking,—complain not of its weight."

The old man paused for breath, drank a deep draught of the water, and restlessly paced to and fro in the small room. The sun was within an hour of setting, and the light streamed in at the narrow window full on his face, as he passed and repassed the opening, making the changes of his countenance awfully sudden as he came to the light, and then disappeared in the partial darkness of the room. A narrow couch stretched along the opposite wall, and on it lay the large upper cloak, or toga, which he habitually wore.

The three sat attentive. Something in the old preacher's look taught them fear. They came as his judges, they felt they were unfit for the high office.

"I remember," said Claudius, after a long pause, during which he seemed to be making a violent effort to suppress some strong emotion, and speaking more in the manner of one thinking aloud and seeking to recal past events than one addressing others. "I remember my youth. I was the son of an Athenian. Both my parents died before I knew them, and left me to the care of an old man, my father's eldest brother. He was a disciple of the doctrines of the Pythagoreans. He taught me well. From him I learnt how to live ; the luscious fruit, the sweet honey, the wholesome grain, these were our food. Exercises of all kinds and study in its season, helped the flight of time till I became a man, then he died and left me his small property. I knew a trade—that of a carpenter—and with the money he left me and my trade, I travelled much—in Greece, Egypt, and Italy. Still I felt unsatisfied with my lot. There was a void here," and the old man placed his shrivelled hand upon his heart, "that would not fill.

"One day—that day is as yesterday—I felt the void was gone ; the place was filled ! I was walking in one of the woods, near to a city in the north of Italy, when I heard a footstep behind me. The leaves rustled as though dancing to the music of the faint breeze that sighed amongst the tops of the young trees. I turned, and beheld—Virginia ! just such a sun shone on her."

The old man paused in his walk, full in front of the window. The reddish light cast a glow upon his features, and he seemed to blush as did the youth when first he saw his idol.

"Virginia ! Shall I ever forget thee !"

He had quite lost his hearers now, while they eagerly drank in his words.

"Her step, her mien, her face ! The void was gone. She bore upon her head a vessel of milk, which she poised gracefully with one arm uplifted, and with the other held her tunic from contact with the damp grass, for the dew was falling. I followed her—saw her deliver the vessel which was emptied—and returned to her. She came back by the same path carelessly swinging the vessel by one of its handles, and singing some childish lay. I had heard in my own city the voices of the hired singers of the great, but never did my ears drink in such melody as flowed from that swelling throat. She thought she was alone, and warbled like a bird. I followed her

still, and saw her enter a poor mean cottage near the borders of the wood. It was not long before I found an excuse in my thirst to call there. I drank milk from a cup she handed me. It was the nectar of the gods."

His hearers started. Where was the Nazarene now ? he was gone. It was a young man with the full tide of passion flowing in his veins to whom they listened.

"The father was a slave of Sporus the magistrate of the district, but was allowed by his owner to have all the privileges of freedom on payment of a certain sum at every month. He was a carpenter, his wife kept a few cows from which the household of Sporus was supplied. I soon hired myself to the father, and being a good workman raised myself in his esteem ; why need I delay, I wooed Virginia—I won her. All the freshness of her girlhood's love was mine. At evenings she would listen to me as I detailed for her my travels by sea and land. She, too, could teach me something, for she had with her mother joined the Nazarenes, the Christians.

"We were to have been united—all was ready, two moons only had to run their course and she was mine. Alas ! how we build on sand.

"Sporus had often seen Virginia. He knew she was his slave. I knew it, too. I must buy her freedom. I went to his house, saw him ; he asked to see her again. I urged that it could not affect the price—he would see her. He saw her—he refused—I could not marry a slave. What could we do ? I offered him thrice her value as a slave—he still refused ; and why ? He wanted her for himself !

"Virginia not my wife, but the slave and mistress of Sporus ! The thought was horrible. Wealth can do much. I persuaded her to flee.

"It wanted but a week of the day fixed, when she, as her custom was, went to the house of Sporus with her milk. I was at work, and saw her go. She was longer than usual returning. I watched the openings in the trees through which she was to come. She came not. I could not endure the suspense—I went to meet her. I reached the wood, I heard her scream. I should have known that voice anywhere. I ran—I found her with disordered dress and dishevelled hair struggling in the arms of her master, Sporus.

"I struck him to the earth, and she twined her arms round me and clung to me, as though dreading to lose me.

"Loose me, dearest, I am powerless. See he rises."

"She left me free, but took fast hold of my girdle, as though there was safety in the very act of touching me.

"He rose. 'Glaucus, she is my slave, her father is my slave, leave her to me.'

"Sporus, thou wretch accursed, I will not leave thee. I will with these fingers tear thy vile heart from its place to feed the dogs, if thou darest but to touch the hem of her robe."

"Glaucus, I warn thee. Thou hast struck me. I am a Roman. I never forget an insult. Yet if thou wilt leave her to me, and leave this place thyself, thou shalt cheat my revenge."

"Demon that thou art, I will not leave thee

with her. Thou art more vile than the very beasts whose cries do nightly echo through this wood. They wed with no unwilling mates, whilst thou—wolf that thou art—wouldst have despoiled this poor lamb, but for me. I will not leave thee with her.'

"Once more, I warn thee, Glaucus, tempt not the vengeance of Sporus. Virginia, if thou dost love him, bid him go. I will make thee my queen, thou shalt have slaves at thy command. Thou who art thyself a slave shalt have thy freedom; thou shalt wed Sporus the magistrate. Bid him go.'

"Sporus, I would not be thy bride for all the riches of earth. Glaucus, leave me not with this wretch; I will live with thee, or die with thee, but leave me not.'

"Once more, Glaucus, I warn thee, go.'

"I will not, thou doubly condemned wretch. I defy thee—thy country's laws thou darest not ask to help thee now.'

"Glaucus—Virginia—I have warned ye thrice. Beware the vengeance of Sporus!'

"He left us—she fell into my arms—I carried her home. The seven days had passed—the night of flight had come. We stole out together, reached the wood in safety; not a sound but from the leaves—the waving of the living, the crushing of the dead under our feet. Hope lit her lamp. A few hours and we should be safe. I heard a sound—other feet. Oh, God! They had us bound, blindfolded, gagged, in a moment. Hope's lamp went out never to be rekindled.

"They hurried us through the wood, and then I know not where, till we came to a building. I heard the gates shut. They fastened my wrists with fetters softly lined with leather, and light. I was almost free. They led me further along a stone vaulted corridor. I heard the echoes, and I heard her footsteps—a door opened, my feet rustled on straw. The gag was taken from my mouth; the bandage from my eyes—Oh, Christ! what a pitiable sight met my gaze. Virginia was kneeling on the ground, her face upraised to mine. I could see by the dim light that came from a large opening above, that she was bound as I was, but—O Sporus! thou child of Tartarus—her fetters were so heavy she could scarcely lift them unaided.

"There was a window in the place. I rushed towards it. She screamed, and was dragged with me. We were linked together—most cruel mockery!

"I sat down on the stone bench against the wall. She leaned on me. We spoke not. Our hearts were too full. I noticed that my slightest movement caused her pain. I could see her eyes close and the lips compressed even in that shady light.

"Morning broke at last: then I found why the lips compressed in pain. Her fetters, four fingers broad, had the edges turned in to the wrists and filed to points like a fine saw. They had cut through the skin, and the blood flowed on the hands and arms. No wonder, now, the poor child screamed so piteously at my movement.

"The place we were in was a small square room with a partial roof, the middle open to the air. Through the centre, in a channel cut in the stone

floor, ran a stream of water. I dipped my finger and tasted it. It was salt to bitterness. On one side of the room was the stone bench on which we had sat the long night through. On the opposite side ran two small fountains—the one water, the other wine; one flowed into a basin till it was full, then ran over and was lost, it was the wine; the other ran away at once, there was no basin to collect that. Between the fountains, at a man's height from the ground, was a circular metal mirror. Other objects the room had none, except a trough or ledged shelf under the mirror. The windows were high—higher than my head—I could just catch sight of the distant hill-tops through them. Such was our prison.

"I looked from the windows to her face. It was the old look, one of love and confidence, which it spoke better than words:—

"Glaucus, thou hast not kissed me since we came here.'

"My poor child' (she was small and delicate, I called her child sometimes), 'I have had sad thoughts; to think that I have brought thee to this suffering, those fetters, galls me to madness.'

"They do not hurt me much when you are quite still; it's when you move they hurt me. But, oh, my Glaucus! it is I that brought thee here, not thou me. Thou mightest have been happy but for me. Ah! woe is me that I should thus have harmed thee!'

"Yet, Virginia, I would rather be here with thee than free with any other. Thou art mine in life or death.'

"Means he to starve us here?'

"Alas! I know not what he means. See, there is water—drink!'

"I lifted her fetters, and she came to the fountain and knelt. I filled my joined hands with the water, and she drank eagerly.

"Wilt not thou drink, Glaucus?'

"And she tried to fill her hands as I had done. I saw the lips firmly set and the tears start to her eyes with the pain of those horrible fetters' teeth.

"Nay, love, I will thus,' and I let the full stream fall into my parched mouth.

"We went back to the bench. I threw her fetters on my knee, to take their weight, and so the day toiled slowly away. The blood coagulated round the wrists, and the least movement tore open the wounds afresh. She slumbered at last with fatigue and pain. How fair she looked as lying on my breast she slept. Her breath was shorter and faster than I had ever known it. Evening came, and the sun was just sinking when I saw the mirror move and close again; and on the shelf there stood bread and flesh—the flesh was scarcely dressed.

"I dared not move, though hunger was rampant within me. At last she woke, and started with surprise, then shrieked with pain. Those accursed fetters! she had forgotten them.

"I am hungry—is there no food?'

"I pointed it out to her, and she eagerly seized the bread and began to eat ravenously. Then stopped—put down the bread.

"Forgive me! I did forget thee, but hunger made me. See! there is flesh—it is of swine, I

cannot eat it. I am a Nazarene. Thou shalt have the flesh, and I the bread, Glaucus.'

"She had forgotten I was a disciple of Pythagoras. She ate—I gave her drink—and still I was famished.

" 'Thou dost not eat thy flesh,' she said, with an effort to smile. 'Ah! I had forgotten, thou didst tell me that thou hadst never tasted flesh, and all the bread—all is gone. Oh, wretch that I am! I have killed thee. Thou wilt perish of hunger whilst I am full. Oh, woe is me!'

" 'Dearest, fear not! I hunger not. Sorrow hath taken away desire for food.'

"I felt the mad wolves gnawing in my vitals then.

"And then came another night. I had placed her on my one knee as before, with her hands resting on the other, on which lay our chains. One arm was round her form, the other hand gripped the chains lest they should slip. She slumbered. The stars grew dim; I was awakened by a wild shriek and a jerk at my fetters. I had fallen asleep, the hand relaxed its hold, a movement of hers had thrown the chains from my knee towards the ground. The whole weight of the united mass was jerked on her slender wrists. What wonder that wild scream of anguish! She had fainted. I carried her to the fountain to bathe her bleeding arms. The stream was *less*! She recovered, and expressed such sorrow for having awoken me, that my eyes filled with tears. She kissed them away, and again we sat as before, till morning once more broke.

"I had noticed the previous day that all round the room there were openings near the bottom of the wall reaching to the floor about a span high. There came through one of these a large rake, which pulled the straw from under our feet, then a large fleece of wool on the end of a pole with which the floor was washed; and soon after a large bundle of straw was flung down from the opening in the roof. There was system in all this: we should be there some time: God only knew how long.

"How I longed for evening—for food. She talked to me of her youth, and then of her change of faith; never had she been so dear to me as at that moment. All the longings of my nature after purity and truth had been chilled by contact with the professors of the various religions. I was half inclined to think there was no truth or purity in any worship, in any God. But then she taught me of the God of the Nazarenes—of the Man-God Christus; told me of his deeds, his life of benevolence, his cruel death. I could not deny that truth was here, here was purity; and as she talked to me I felt I could believe. I was a believer in the Prophet of Nazareth from that time.

"At last evening came. We both watched intently the mirror. The light flashed a moment on its surface, it turned, the bread and flesh were there, the mirror closed again.

" 'Glaucus, thou shalt have thy share of bread to-night.' She broke it in halves: there was less bread than the day before. She saw it, too.

"We ate our bread in silence. I gave her the last portion of mine. She kissed me, and devoured

it most eagerly, and looked at the flesh—it was *raw*!

" 'Not yet, dearest!' I said, 'not yet.'

"She understood me, and we lay down again for the night.

"Days and nights passed. Each day saw the fresh straw, each night there was less bread. One night there was *no* bread, and but little flesh. That night I saw it first!

"She lay asleep, breathing quickly, with the fever-flush upon her cheek; not a sound save her breathing, the murmuring of the salt stream at our feet, and the trickling of the wine fountain. I saw it then—I could not look at her. I could not endure that she should be there so still. I woke her with kisses.

" 'What dost thou want, Glaucus?' she said, peevishly, 'thou hast awakened me to pain. I was dreaming of home, and had forgotten these, and thou hast put them on again. Thine are soft, thou dost not feel them; let me sleep.'

"I murmured not at her reproach, and again she slept, and again it came. I shut my eyes, it was still before them; I looked up at the stars, it hid them: I could not see for it.

"Morning came—she awoke fevered and dry. 'Water, Glaucus, or I perish!' I led her to the fountain. The *stream* had become *drops*!

"I held my hand, as drop by drop it fell into the palm, and then put it to her lips.

" 'More, Glaucus, more! Stay, let me come.'

"She put her lips to the aperture, while I held her fetters, and drank; then sank into my arms exhausted with the effort. The day passed in a sort of torpor.

"Evening came—no bread, and less flesh. It was nearer.

" 'Glaucus, I must eat! Christus, forgive me! but I must eat. Give me the flesh.'

"I gave it her. She tore it from my reluctant hand like a wild animal, and with her teeth and nails rent it into shreds, which she bolted whole. Ye gods! what a sight for these poor eyes it was!

" 'Eat, my Glaucus,' she said, fiercely, 'eat, I say.'

" 'But thou'lt not have enough, Virginia.'

" 'True! Thou, Glaucus, shalt eat to-morrow.'

"Eat to-morrow! I kissed her lips, still wet with the juicy flesh, and tasted—Oh, it was life! To-morrow! to-morrow! would it never come?

"That night I saw it more clearly than ever. I could not look at her as she slept, it was so clearly there.

"Morning again—again the fountain—the water drop, drop, drop! The wine gurgled in its plenty, we both heard it, had heard it, it always ran so.

" 'No love; not yet, not yet.'

"Evening again. With what horrible intensity we watched the mirror. It moved—it turned; there was flesh—less than before.

"She seized it, and had it to her mouth in a moment, and threw herself on the floor to take the weight of her chains off her hands.

" 'Virginia, I perish: give me to eat!'

"She tore off a morsel, and dropped it in the straw. I seized it and ate it. It was *fulness* of life: more I must have.

"'Virginia, more!—more, for pity's sake! Thine own Glaucus asks it of thee.'

"She tore off a smaller morsel than before. It was maddening. More I must have. I held her hands, and tore the remainder in halves.

"The poor wrists bled afresh with her resistance. She swallowed her portion, and then with eager tongue licked her fetters.

"I was a man again. The food was like new life: but still I saw it.

"'Glaucus, I thirst. Let me drink.'

"Once more I led her to the fountain: there was no water! The wine ran gurgling into its full basin, and flowed away.

"'Glaucus, I must drink, my throat is on fire!'

"I saw frenzy in her eyes. I could not deny her longer. 'But a little, dearest Virginia! but a little.' She put aside my hands with the wine in them, impatiently, and stooped down to the basin and drank.

"I thought she would never cease; at last she did—raised her flushed face to mine.

"'Drink, Glaucus! drink! My fetters pain me not: I am cool now.'

"In a few minutes she looked at me again, and put her arms about me: her fetters were lighter now. I met her look.

"I have wandered at nightfall through the



streets, and seen eyes that as a boy I wondered at, as a youth admired, as a man pitied. My God! my God! those eyes looked at me now! My own Virginia, pure as an angel, was looking at me, as those eyes only can look.

"'Glaucus, dearest Glaucus!' and her arms tightened round me, and her lips were pressed to mine. Her breath, odorous of wine, half-suffocated me. Would that I had died before I had been obliged to recognise in this fierce drunken girl my own Virginia! Yet it was so. I could not return her fierce caresses.

"'Dost thou not love me, dearest Glaucus?'

* * * * *

"The old man paused, choked with his emotions.

"The horrors of that night I shall never forget. I struggled, and I conquered. She slept at last, the heavy, dead sleep of those given to wine.

"I wiped the dews from her brow again and again till morning came. She woke not; the midday came, and still she slept. I saw it all the time,—all through the lone night as she lay in my arms, I saw it.

"As the sun was going down she woke and looked at me with a new light in her eyes; cried for water. I had not a drop. Then she sang again some hymn of childhood, then knelt in front of me.

"'Marcus' (she thought she was a child again, and I her brother), 'I'll make thee a garland,' and she gathered the straw of the place, put the ears together, and made a garland; then put it on my head. I helped her by holding the fetters; she thought I held her.

"'Let me go, Marcus,—let me go.'

"'Nay, Virginia, thy Marcus loves thee too well.'

"She looked from my face to her hands. 'See, I've found some poppies among the corn and squeezed them; see, the juice is running down my arm. I'll paint thee, Marcus, as we saw the man from Britain painted in the market-place; it's red, not blue; but never mind;' and she took a few pieces of the straw and put them to her poor arms, and with her own dear blood streaked my face.

" 'Now I'll kiss thee, Marcus, and we'll go home. I must have milk.'

"I humoured her, and we walked about the room. I gave her a few drops of wine, and she was contented and slept.

"Evening again. I watched the mirror alone. The flesh came—less than ever. I feared to wake her, yet I *must* eat. I took her softly in my arms, and moved towards the ledge. I reached it. I must free one hand for a moment. I reached the flesh, but I felt her heavy chains slipping. They fell, jerked her arms violently, and with a loud clang reached the floor. She woke, gave one look at my face, all blood-stained as it was, and shouted 'Glaucus, Glaucus! help! Sporus—thou demon, let me go!' She tore my face with her nails and bit me, and shrieked again and again. I've heard the cry of the wild bird—I've heard the cry of the despairing seamen, as they struggled in the waves—I've heard the wildest of all sounds, the wind amongst the mountain pines, but I never heard such a sound as that before or since. I hear it now!"—and the old man put his hands to his ears, as if to keep out the sound.

"She thought it was Sporus; and struggled for life.

" 'I am thine own—thy Glaucus.'

" 'Liar that thou art,' and again the cries for Glaucus, and the same wild scream. She tore herself from my grasp and fled round and round the cell. I could have held her by the chains but for the poor wrists; at last I caught her robe and she fell, but it was on the sharp edge of the wine basin, and the blood flowed from a great gash in her fair forehead, and then she swooned, and in the odour of that blood as I staunch it I saw it with terrible clearness. I dare not kiss her forehead whilst it flowed. I held her and lay by her side while I ate my feast. I felt strong again, and reproached myself for eating—'twas but the longer to live, and why live? Yet I could not but eat.

"The moon was shining brightly on her face, and again I saw it as she lay. What would I not have given to see it not? It wanted but a little to sunrise; the stars were growing fainter in the grey morning light when she woke. Oh, what happiness! the old look—the look she had when she sat at my feet in the wild free woods.

" 'Have I been asleep long, my Glaucus? I have had such dreams; I have been a child, and then I dreamed of the woods and Sporus again, and I have dreamed that I was thy bride, and that thou didst die upon our nuptial couch. In vain I called thee, kissed thee, pressed thee to me—thou wert dead; and I a widowed virgin.'

" 'Dearest, thou hast been sick nigh to death; it was not all a dream. Art thou in pain now?'

" 'No, no pain now.' It was so near. I knew when she said that.

" 'Glaucus, I shall leave you soon. You will think of those things I said to thee of my god Christus? Wilt thou have anything to live for, when I am gone?'

" 'I shall go soon too, I hope—I know not how to live without thee, my Virginia.'

" 'But men die not when they will, save with guilt; thou yet mayest escape this when I am gone.'

" 'True, dearest.' I should not have been there

an hour but for her and her chains. Freedom or death was the work of a moment; the windows I could reach easily.

" 'Glaucus; wilt thou grant me a last request?'

" 'Ay, my life; anything that thou wilt ask.'

"She reached up her face to kiss me. She had no strength. She fell back. I stooped and kissed her. We could have wept, but nature had no useless moisture for tears—the eye-balls were strained and dry.

" 'Promise me that thou wilt become a preacher of those truths I have taught thee so humbly, yet so willingly—thou wilt, my Glaucus?'

" 'Thy God helping me, I will preach Christus amongst men till death summon me to thee, love. Soon, soon! O God, soon!'

" 'I am so happy.' She looked so. I felt she was happy.

" 'Christus, bless with thy spirit this thy servant. Make his labours for thy cause, for thy glory, successful. Bless us both, O Christus!' She paused, put up her chained arms to my neck, drew my face to hers, kissed me tenderly. 'Bless my Glaucus, O gracious Christus!' she murmured, and so died."

The old preacher sobbed not alone.

"I let her lips chill mine, still I moved them not. She was dead! Sporus was well avenged: his slave, my own Virginia, was dead; I thought of the evening. It came—the mirror moved not—there was no flesh. The wine still gurgled and sparkled in its basin. I looked towards the windows, they were gone!—there was no escape. It must be. It was there with me all that night, all that long day.

"Evening came again—the mirror moved not—it was near, dreadfully near. I took my robe, twisted it into a rope, and put it round my throat—drew it tighter and tighter—I could not keep my promise—I *must* die now. I could not look upon it longer. Tighter and tighter—it was going, thank God! All was growing dim and indistinct. Tighter yet—it was nearly gone. Tighter yet—the earth opened. I fell down a fathomless abyss, and all was darkness. I knew no more.

"Alas! I woke again. It was night. I felt weaker—I saw I was still *there*;—the robe had broken and saved me. To what? There she lay so calm, so peaceful, so holy, in her sleep of death. I could hardly think she was dead, yet she was, and I saw it there.

"I *must* drink. I crawled to the wine fountain—I drank—deeply—but hunger was now more furious than ever, and there was no flesh.

"I carried her carefully back to the bench. I saw it coming now! A giddiness seized me—it went away—I saw it nearer. I stooped to kiss her lips. It was nearer still again. I stopped—and once again—and then—My God! It had come! at last. IT WAS THERE! God forgive me! but I was MAD!

* * * *

"I was a king! I feasted royally, plenty was mine. I slept on a bed of softest down. I ate when I pleased, I drank—how I drank!—'twas strange, my hands were bound still.

* * * *

I was a runner in the games. I saw the assembled throng. I heard their murmurs when they saw my form. I had fleetness—we started. The circus was small, very small. I found I drew after me a weight. I knew no such game—it was new, but I would run. I ran faster and faster; the pace was killing me; my eyes started from their sockets, the golden apple rolled before me—I stooped for it—I fell, and all was dark once more.

* * * *

I woke. I was a gladiator. Once more the arena, and still so small. I saw my foe. He was so like myself! He must have fought just before, the fresh blood was on his face. I moved cautiously—he was gone—I watched—moved again—he came back. I lifted my hand to strike, I was not free—neither was he—it was a new game, but I would fight. He raised his fist—I struck at his face with all my force—I hit him—but we both fell—he was under. He was bound to me! I struck again and again. I had killed him now. Again and again I struck—he moved. I seized him by the throat. We rolled over and over each other—and then he was quite still. I watched and drank, and slept while I watched.

* * * *

“I woke again; it was dark. I was a prisoner chained to—what?—a stone—a wet stone! Ha! ha! they had tied me with ropes, with knotted ropes! I felt for a knife—I had none—I could not see.

“They forgot the prisoner’s teeth! I gnawed and twisted the ropes all the long night—they were old and rotten—they stank in my nostrils; but I gnawed on, and I was free once more.

“I was free! I ran, I jumped, I leaped. I danced to wild music that seemed close to me. I was free! I was in the wild woods once more—the trees waved, the wind kissed my cheek as of yore. I lay down beneath a tree and slept. I dreamed of Virginia—she came to me—sat beside me—she was soon to be my bride. My heart leapt at the thought. She was my bride now—I led her from the temple. The day passed, the night came, I lay beside my bride. I pressed her to me—she answered not—she was cold!

* * * *

“I awoke. *I was not mad now*; but where was I? It was the same place—the old square opening to the sky, the same gurgling of the wine fountain, my chains on my wrists. But the foul odour! I could not breathe. And that—what was that? No! it could not be *she*. It was she—shall I ever forget that sight.

“I see it now—my God! I see it now,” shrieked the old man, “that putrid mass, bruised, torn, mutilated—without a trace of humanity about it—the bones showing through the torn shreds of skin, the flesh eaten—yes, eaten away! Those ears in which I whispered words of love—those eyes in which I saw my happiness—those lips that pressed so lovingly to mine—those tender breasts on which I’d hoped to see my children hang—gone!—gone!—all were gone; and in their place the eyes from their fleshless sockets glared on me, while the lipless teeth seemed to gnash at me from that ghastly skull. Armless too—and the arms!—I started. The bones were in the

fetters still—*her* fetters. They still hung to mine. I was free in all but them.

“I looked round and saw the mirror; the matted beard, the blood-stained savage face showed me ALL !

“One window was open *now*. I leapt, caught the sill, and was out, running as if for life to get *that sight* from mine eyes. It would not go ; never went — never has gone ! Thirty years IT — *this ravening horror*—has been before me. I have seen everything through that, as through a veil. It was growing indistinct. Ye have called IT back again. I see IT now. My God !—my God ! I see IT now !” and the old man would have fallen, but that his judges caught him and laid him on the couch.

A few minutes and he revived. His voice was weak and trembling.

“Fabulus, forgive me that I could not see her die. Brethren, forgive me that I could not eat your feasts of flesh.” He paused, raised himself into a sitting posture ; his eyes strangely bright. “Brethren, before I depart, I would pray with ye once more.” His hands were uplifted in prayer ; the voice came low and faint. “Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and—forgive us our trespasses,—as we forgive them that trespass against us——” A spasm crossed his face, his chest heaved as with a mighty effort ; his voice, low before, burst out now with a violence that shook the walls. “Help me, oh God ! I must,— I will, —I *do* forgive thee. Sporus, thou, even *thou*, art now forgiven——Christus have mercy, have mer—— IT has gone—gone !” He struggled, knelt, leaned forward as though he saw something in the air, stretched out the old withered arms to grasp the phantom, while a smile of happiness unspeakable lighted up the pallid features.

“Virginia ! I come—I come !”—then fell back into their arms—*dead*.

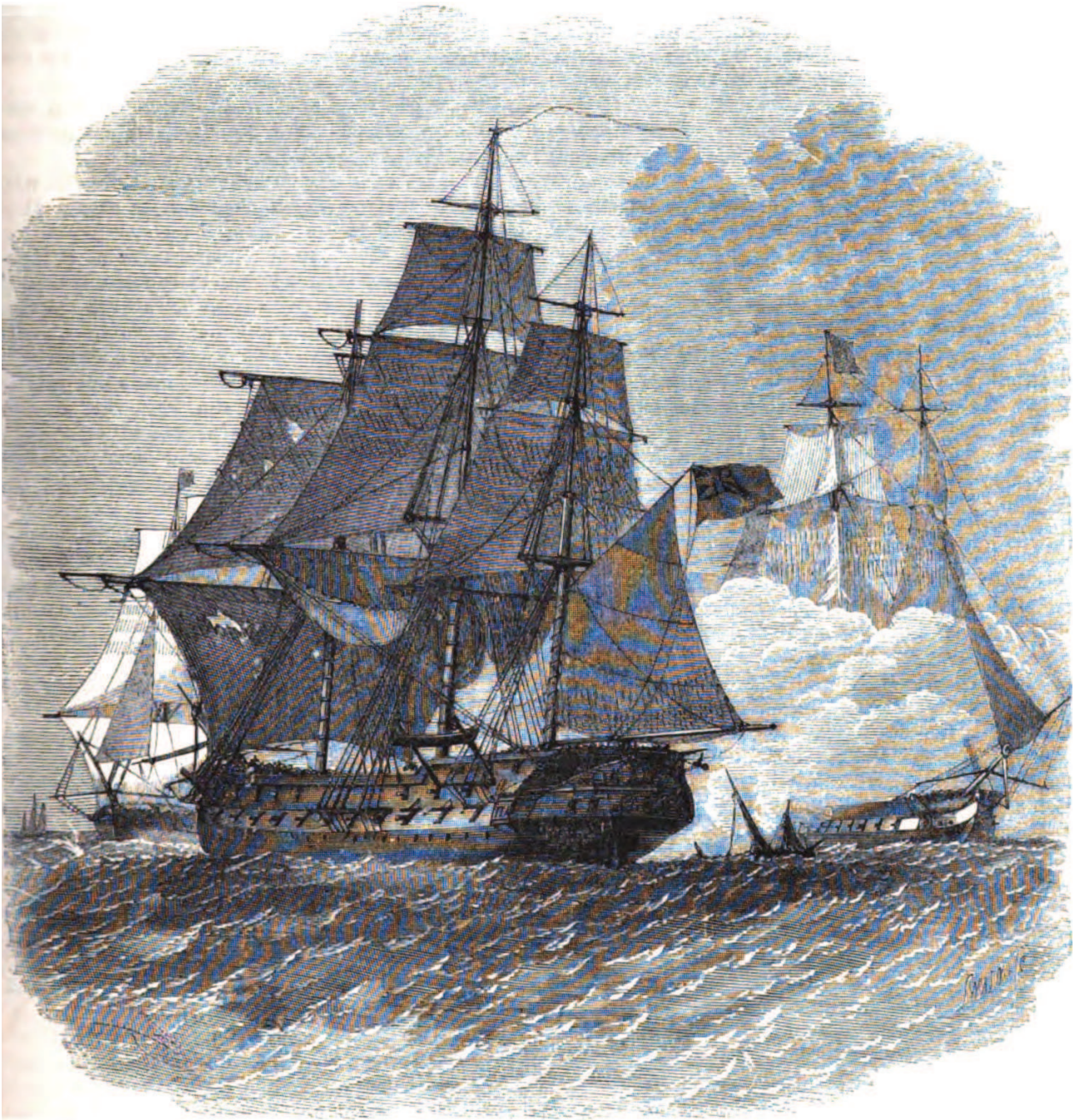
* * * *

It was night ; the sun had set. He was with Virginia now.

It was gone for ever.

A. STEWART HARRISON.

A CRUISE IN A TUB.



AMID the varied improvements in naval architecture to which the latter half of the nineteenth century has given birth : at a time when a man-of-war may undergo so many alterations in the course of construction, that before she is launched all traces of the model on which she was designed are lost, there are still extant vessels with the distinguishing initials H.M.S. before their names,

to which the profane are apt to apply the significant, if uncomplimentary epithet of "tub." And in so doing, these scoffers may be considered merely to imply that the craft in question does not reach their ideas of perfection.

But in the year 1782 the term "tub" possessed in the British Navy a more special signification. In the vocabulary of those days a tub was a forty-

four-gun ship. She carried sixteen guns on her main, sixteen on her lower, and the remainder on her quarter-deck and fore-castle.

Her build was similar to that which popular prejudice assigns to the aldermen of the City of London; for her claims to symmetry were materially affected by the undue proportion which her circumference bore to her length. Her sailing powers were those of a hay-stack. She went before the wind admirably.

It was not then with feelings of unmixed satisfaction that the Honourable Captain James L— received the intelligence of his appointment to a ship of this description.

The struggle between England and her American colonies was drawing to a close. France, Spain, and Holland had successively declared against us, and our naval supremacy was by no means undisputed.

Captain James belonged to a gallant family. Two of his brothers had won laurels both afloat and on shore, and he himself, at the age of eight-and-twenty, was already a distinguished officer. This, according to the rules of English naval policy from time immemorial, would fully account for his being selected to command a tub. Such as she was, however, he was fully prepared to make the best of her.

He sailed with orders to intercept, if possible, some of the convoys which were then leaving Brest for America with stores and munitions of war.

It was on a fine Sunday evening that he dropped out of Plymouth harbour, taking advantage of the ebb-tide under his lee, with light airs from the eastward. After making a good offing from the Lizard, he shaped his course so as to cross the track of the convoys as soon as possible.

On Monday, the wind got round a little to the southward of east, freshening a little at the same time, and with this leading breeze all the old tub's canvas told.

It was about daylight on Wednesday that the look-out announced that a strange sail was in sight. As the day broke, he gave notice of another and another, and by nine o'clock they had sighted five vessels—the largest apparently of heavy metal—and then about six miles distant, broad upon their larboard bow.

The first lieutenant was an old sailor and a Scotchman: and was imbued with the amount of caution which the combination of those two qualifications might naturally be expected to produce. He evidently did not like the aspect of affairs; and when they made out another of the ships to be a large corvette, apparently of French build, his anxiety became manifest.

"One at a time would have suited us better," said the captain, addressing him, and indicating the enemy.

"Weel, yer honor, we can just show them a clean pair o' heels, wi' the wind as it is i' the noo."

"It will be time enough to think about that, if the worst comes to the worst," replied the captain; "but I should like to have a better look at them first. Edge a little closer, master, and let us see what they are like."

The master smiled, as he gave the necessary orders. He had sailed with Captain James before, and formed his own conclusions with regard to what "a little closer" meant.

The squadron which they proceeded to survey was composed of French and American ships. The largest, which bore the broad pendant of a commodore, was nominally a fifty-gun ship, but as was usual with French vessels of war at that time, she carried some half-dozen guns more than her rating, and a more numerous crew than would have been found in an English vessel of the same size. The second was a corvette, smaller than the English ship, but a beautiful craft, built on the last new model (without one alteration upon the original plan), and with a crew almost equal in number, though not in any other respect, to that of the "tub."

The third was a sloop of war, and the two remaining vessels were American merchantmen carrying letters of marque.

For some time the French were in doubt with regard to the identity of the stranger under their lee, being half-inclined from her personal appearance to put her down as a merchantman, making a greater show than her resources were likely to support. They felt grateful to her also for saving them the trouble of going out of their way to take her, which would have been contrary to their orders. When at last they made her out to be a man-of-war (such as she was), the French commodore signalled to the sloop and merchantmen to go on under easy sail, and that he would overtake them as soon as he had captured the Englishman.

Captain James had continued the process of "edging" for the purpose of "looking at them," till a distance of little more than a mile and a half intervened. Then the French commodore and the corvette hauled to the wind, and hove in stays to face their coming foe.

"We must fight now," said Captain James to the first lieutenant, trying hard to suppress the delight which *would* show itself in his countenance.

"Aye, aye, sir," said the old Scotchman, getting ready with a will, now that they were as for it.

At this moment they were nearing the enemy rapidly, having the commodore on their weather-bow, and the corvette still further to windward.

"Now, master," said Captain James, "haul sharp up to the wind, and let us try if we can't weather them both."

And here the aldermanic build of the old tub stood her in good stead. She could wear and stay a great deal quicker, and in much less room than the Great Eastern, though she could not go ahead quite so fast.

Fortunately, there was not much sea, and the French ships were now lying-to on the starboard tack, so that she passed within four cable-length of the commodore's bows, though not scatheless.

Boom! go all the main-deck guns of the Frenchman that she can bring to bear, and the loss of the foretop-gallant mast and jib-boom.

showed that the French were keeping to their usual tactics, notwithstanding their superior force.

Steadily the tub forges ahead, preserving a portentous silence. One old tar in command of a gun on the starboard quarter, who had followed Captain James from his last ship, with the licence allowed to favourites, besought piteously to be allowed to give her "just one" as they passed.

"Keep your physic for the corvette, Jack," replied the captain.

And the corvette received a full dose; for as the tub ran across her bows at half the distance at which she had passed the commodore, she hulled her with almost every gun, receiving only the contents of her bow-chasers in reply.

"Now, master, bear up and run us alongside of the corvette in the twinkling of a bedpost."

There was just time to reload the upper-deck guns, and to pour in one smashing broadside from both decks, when a crash aloft announced a collision between the two vessels. The helm had been put suddenly up, according to the captain's order, and the tub ran *stem* on into the corvette's quarter. The bowsprit caught her after-rigging, and in a moment the two vessels were heaving together upon the deep.

The boarders, under the first lieutenant, had been ready and waiting for some time, and the superior height of the tub enabled them to leap down with ease upon the decks of the corvette. As the two ships lay locked in a deadly embrace, Captain James would have reinforced his officer with his last man, rather than fail in his object. But there was no need. The old Scotchman, with a long two-edged Andrew Ferrara, which had done good service in many a well-fought field, led the way nobly, and more than one guard went down beneath its terrible sweep. The good cutlasses and long pikes which followed him made short work. The tide of battle never rolled backward for an instant. The quarter-deck was first taken. Then, after a desperate struggle, the Frenchmen were driven along the waists, the boarders battening down the hatches as they advanced. There was one gallant rally on the fore-castle, till a last charge drove a mass of fighting men over the bows with their arms in their hands. In a quarter of an hour there was not a living Frenchman left upon the deck.

Captain James, who had coolly counted on the capture as a matter of course, had given the strictest orders that they were, if possible, to prevent the crew of the corvette from striking her flag, and this they succeeded in doing.

When at last the tub cast the corvette off, the French flag was still flying at her peak, and the commodore imagined that she had succeeded in beating off the attack.

An inquiry might naturally be made, how that respected officer had been employed during the interval. When the English ship luffed and crossed his bows without firing, he had imagined that she wished to decline the combat. He was undeceived when she opened fire upon the corvette, but his comrade soon lay so completely between them as to cover the English ship from his fire. After he had forged some distance ahead,

by the time he had again borne up, so as to lay broadside on to the Englishman, the corvette was taken, and in charge of a prize crew.

The ship of the French commodore was a fine vessel, with a well trained crew; and when attacked exactly as she expected, or allowed to fight according to her own ideas of propriety, she acquitted herself very respectably.

When, therefore, she at last succeeded in exchanging broadsides with the Englishman, passing her almost within pistol shot, her superior weight of metal told with deadly effect, and the old tub almost heeled over on her beam-ends as she received the weight of shot, though fortunately none struck her below the water line. The commodore's ship suffered much less in proportion from the English broadside, and the crew gave a cheer as they hastened to reload.

"One more like that, and she must strike or sink," said the commodore. But his triumph was doomed to be short-lived. He has signalled to the corvette to stand off and rake the Englishman, but she does not appear to comprehend. Perhaps, in the smoke, she has been unable to interpret his orders. For now she sails under her former comrade's stern. But oh, horror! What is this? Crash go the cabin windows of the commodore. One, two shots strike the mizen-mast, and it goes by the board. The corvette pours in the whole of her broadside at biscuit-throwing distance, raking with every gun. Quite unsuspecting that she had passed into English hands, no effort had been made to avoid her manœuvre, and the old Scotchman had judged his distance admirably. Half a dozen guns are dismounted by her fire, and the French commodore and the next officer in command are killed by a splinter from one of them. The wreck of the mizen-mast fouls the rudder, and for a short time she becomes unmanageable. As she broaches to, the old tub takes advantage of her disaster, and crossing her stern, rakes her once more. Her decks are piled with killed and wounded. She fights gallantly for some time longer, but she can do little against the two ships, which are both beautifully handled. At last her fore-mast follows the fate of the mizen, and she is compelled to strike.

When the English captain came on board to receive the sword of the commanding officer, he found a midshipman in charge. Every superior officer was killed or placed *hors de combat*.

There was a great deal to be done in the way of making arrangements for the disposition of the large number of prisoners, and there was a terrible amount of work cut out for the surgeons.

At last Captain James found a few moments to exchange congratulations with his first lieutenant.

"You are not sorry we edged up to look at them?" he said. But there was still a cloud upon the careful brow of the gallant Caledonian, which success alone was unable to remove. He would have set little value upon a statue of Victory, if it was not very richly gilt.

"I canna help thinking aboot the merchantmen," he replied. "Its just a vara great pity they should get awa'."

For be it known to the uninitiated, that though capturing ships of war might give the greater

glory, taking merchantmen brought the larger profit.

Now, Captain James had no objection to prize-money; and for spending the largest amount in the shortest time, he might have been backed freely against any officer in H.M. service. Accordingly, he caught in a moment at the suggestion of the first lieutenant.

"If you think the corvette can catch them, you are quite welcome to try, but I cannot give you more than enough hands to sail her."

"Weel, captain, if we just keep up the French flag till we are pretty close, I've nae doot when we show our own they'll just streek without the firing a shot."

And the canny Scot's supposition proved perfectly correct. He sighted the chase early the next morning, and they very obligingly hove to for him to overtake them. When they perceived their error, it was too late to retrieve it. The three ships would have been more than a match for the corvette, manned as she was; but the sloop of war showed a clean pair of heels, and left the heavily-laden merchantmen to their fate.

They hauled down their flags, as a matter of course. After they had struck, the wary lieutenant ordered the greater part of their crews on board the corvette, and carefully stowed them away in irons below with the rest of the prisoners.

On the evening of the second day they overtook the tub and her great prize. Captain James had found great difficulty in keeping the latter afloat, and had been compelled to make the prisoners work at the pumps. But now the wind got round to the southward and westward, and enabled them all to reach Plymouth Sound in safety. A revenue cutter, who had spared them a few hands, acted as their herald, and the people flocked down in crowds to give the old tub and her four prizes a hearty welcome.

In the many long years of naval warfare which followed—in a thousand fights where the long odds lay against the British tar, the memory of Captain James and the old tub lit the road to victory, as the pointers guide the glance towards the polar star.

HERBERT VAUGHAN.

A LEGEND OF SWAFFHAM.

SOME ninety or a hundred miles N.N.E. of London, there is a thriving and populous market-town. Built on the summit of a lofty eminence, and surrounded by a well wooded country for the space of a couple of miles, which is further environed by an open tract of heath several thousand acres in extent, Swaffham has for many centuries maintained its position as one of the most healthy and well-to-do market-towns in England. My story dates three hundred and fifty years back, and at that time there lived in one of the outskirts of the town a poor pedlar, by name John Chapman. Very little was known respecting him; he had carried his pack into Swaffham one day, and liking the place and its inhabitants, and its inhabitants liking him, had forgotten to carry it out again. At least he carried it no farther than the outskirts in question, where he took possession of a small tenement, and dropping in some measure the roving life of a pedlar, contrived to obtain a decent livelihood by following the avocation of a tinker, some knowledge of which trade he had, in his peregrinations, managed to pick up. In this manner, John Chapman had lived amongst the town folk for the space of twenty years, only leaving them once or twice for a few weeks in

each year, when he undertook pedestrian excursions to dispose of the productions of his handiwork, for since his entrance into Swaffham he had to trust his own skill and ingenuity to furnish contents for the pedlar's pack. He was still a young man when he took up his residence in the town, but, in his capacity of pedlar, had done what was then considered a great deal of travelling, and being a close observer, and possessing a good way of retailing his experiences, he soon became the village oracle, a position which his half-yearly excursions enabled him to maintain with ease.

Some three years after his first appearance at her father's house, John had wooed and won the affections of "sweete Mary," the pretty daughter of the worthy Boniface who kept the hostelry yclept "Ye Redde Lyone," the inn patronised by John and his friends. The day was fixed for the wedding, and all prepared, when a malignant fever brought the girl to her bed, from which she was in a few weeks taken to be laid in a quiet grave in the neighbouring churchyard. There was nothing loud or showy about the grief of the bereaved lover; he followed his sweetheart to the grave, and then, the same evening, set out for a much longer tour than usual. When he returned, his mind had, to all appearance, recovered its usual healthy tone, and he had the same quiet, easy flow of spirits, but the blow had struck deep and sure, and the softest feelings the pedlar's heart ever knew were buried under the yew tree in the village graveyard.

Now I wish it to be distinctly understood that my hero was not at all superstitious. Of course he placed some little faith in a legend he heard from some one who took charge of him as a child, showing how a ghost had appeared to his grandfather, though for what purpose, and in what way the circumstance affected the fortunes of his family, it was difficult to say; and he was inclined to place a slight degree of credence in the story which the sexton used to tell over his tankard, how, once in a century or so, anyone visiting the village church at night would see strange lights moving about the interior of the building, hear strange voices proceeding from among the tombs, the pattering of invisible feet up the aisles of the church, and, lastly, most unearthly music coming from the organ.

Still, with one or two such well authenticated exceptions as these, John plumed himself on not believing in ghost stories; and boasted that no matter where it was his fortune to rest for the night, he could resign himself to the particular satellite of the drowsy god that watched over his nocturnal destinies without fear of being disturbed by any spectral visitants. There was, nevertheless, matter for deep and grave reflection when he awoke one morning after having dreamt that if within a week from that date he made a journey to London, he would hear of something that, in modern parlance, would be termed "greatly to his advantage."

The result of his cogitations was a resolution to say nothing concerning the affair to his friends at the hostelry, but to wait patiently and see what the next night's rest would bring forth, and in case the dream should be repeated to start at once

for London. That night's rest brought with it a recurrence of the vision, and before noon on the following day John had started on his journey, having furnished himself with a stock of articles which he intended should defray his expenses. In those days people had no opportunity of complaining of the speed, or rather want of speed, of Eastern Counties' Railway trains; coaches, or public conveyances of any kind, were things unknown, and so the best, and almost only, way for a man strong in body, but weak in purse, to make the journey, was that adopted by our pedlar—on foot. Travelling thus, in the true pedlar style, and without anything extraordinary happening to him on the road, he in due time arrived at London, and leaving his pack with mine host of the Bull, in Aldgate, lost little time in proceeding to the Bridge, to which place he had, in his dream, been directed to proceed.

I am not about to bore my readers with a description of Old London Bridge, which has already been done so much better than I could do it. Suffice it to say that John had spent some hours in traversing its narrow footway without meeting with anything which would lead him to suppose that his dream was in course of fulfilment, and had commenced the attempt—which all of us have made at some time or other—to convince himself that what he was doing was not likely to prove of the slightest service to him, and that by far the wisest course of procedure he could adopt would be to make the best of his way back from whence he came, when he was accosted by an individual whose appearance presented somewhat of the soldier of fortune, sobered down by the habits of a merchant, and finished off with a slight dash of the gentleman.

"Thou seemest ill at ease, friend," said the newcomer; "hast thou lost thy way? If so, I may, perchance, be of service to thee."

"And if I had," replied the pedlar, "I have years enough to know that the most unlikely way of finding it is to pace to and fro this bridge at night. But sooth to say (and thou may'st laugh at me an' thou wilt), I have come to London on the vain errand of a dream, and am somewhat ashamed of myself for having done so."

"Alas, good friend!" replied the other; "an' I had given way to such foolish fancies as that, I might have proved myself as very a fool as thou hast; for 'tis not long since I dreamt that at a place called Swaffham, in Norfolk, dwells one John Chapman, a pedlar; and, moreover, I was told in my dream that if I went thither, I should find at the back of the said John Chapman his house, a tree, under which is buried a pot of money."

If my hero possessed sufficient coolness not to let astonishment deprive him of the power of replying, he also possessed sufficient prudence to supply its place; so simply wishing his new acquaintance "Good night," he returned to the place where he had left his pack, and early the next morning hastened homewards.

It was a bright moonlight night. The hours had all retired to their respective haunts, and the lights were extinguished throughout the town, when the pedlar, armed with spade and pickaxe,

walked quietly out at his back door, and commenced digging at the foot of a large tree that grew close by. He had worked on for some time perseveringly; and, as in the case of his walk upon the Bridge, was on the point of dubbing himself a fool for his pains, when his spade struck against something hard, and stooping to discover what caused the obstruction, he found a large brass pot filled with money, and inscribed:—

"Under me doth lie, another much richer than I."

The sentence was in Latin, but by the aid of what little learning he had, John contrived to make out something of its meaning, and to set to work with renewed vigour. His toil was rewarded by the finding of another vessel much larger than the first, and filled with old coin. Soon the hole was filled up, and the ground made to look as much as possible like what it did before he had made the excavation, and John conveyed his prizes into the house, examined them, found them of great value, concealed them, and then retired to



rest, to think over his treasure and the purpose to which he should devote it.

I should, perhaps, ere this, have mentioned, that for some years past Swaffham church had been very much out of repair, and those entrusted with its affairs had been straining every nerve to raise money for the purpose of re-decorating and partially rebuilding it, but as yet not more than half the requisite sum had been obtained. Now it occurred to our hero that he could not do better than devote some portion of his new gotten wealth to the cause; and he, therefore, took the first opportunity that presented itself of calling upon his pastor, and to the latter's no small astonishment offered to rebuild the north aisle and tower, informing him how he had

"dreamed a dream, wherein was disclosed unto him a way in which he might become the possessor of an exceeding great treasure. That his dream had been fulfilled beyond his greatest expectations; and now, being no longer poor, he wished to show his gratitude by doing all he could for the service of the Church."

John Chapman lived to be a man of some standing in the parish of Swaffham, though tradition saith that he altered but little his simple manner of living, and did not give up his bi-annual excursions until years after the necessity for carrying his pack with him had gone by. It is also supposed that he strengthened the ties that held him to the place by taking unto him a wife; and I am led to place some faith in

this, from the fact that there once existed in the north aisle a seat, on which was carved the effigy of a pedlar with his pack and dog, and his wife looking over the door of a shop ; the latter feature in the picture being accounted for on the ground that John's wife had a very natural desire to have her memory as much as possible associated with that of a husband whom she must have admired so greatly. Many years ago, when the nave and aisles were repaved, this and many other carved seats were removed, and now form a piece of patchwork, designated the Tinker's Seat, in the chapel of the north transept, by a visit to which, the curious may convince themselves of the veracity of my story.

GEORGE HEATHCOTE.

THE SWEEPER OF DUNLUCE.



ON the northern coast of Antrim, about midway between Portrush and the Giant's Causeway, perched on a rock almost wholly separated from the mainland by a precipitous chasm, stand the romantic and interesting ruins of the castle of Dunluce. They are endowed with peculiarly impressive associations, and for those who take a melancholy pleasure in the contemplation of the grandeur of things whose glory has faded, there could hardly be found a spot which could rouse more poetic or pathetic imagination, from the idea it gives of decayed strength and majestic solitude. You cannot tear yourself away from this magic spot where you wander with rapture. Its walls convey the idea of being fraught with reminiscences of dark and hidden deeds, and the roaring of the wild waves, as they dash irritably on the rocks some hundred feet below, seems to struggle to give utterance to some painful secret of which they alone have been witnesses. The sole means of entering the fortress is by a bridge, of about fifteen inches in width, which spans with a single arch the dreadful abyss beneath, and being unprotected wholly on either side, requires a steady head and foot to enable you to cross it.

though the idea of falling is far worse than the actual danger of doing so. Hollowed out of the rock on which the castle is built, and immediately beneath it, is a cavern of vast dimensions, and the beating surge re-echoes with thundering monotony through its lofty recesses.

If you have courage to cross the bridge, on reaching the other side, you are conducted to the right, into a circular apartment called Mava's Tower, and are desired to remark how carefully it is swept.

"Who undertakes that office?" you ask.

"No living being," is the answer. "Every night this prison-like chamber is swept like a ball-room, and yet no one enters it."

"Who, then, keeps it in order?"

"Mava, the Sweeper of Dunluce, and the

banshee of the Macquillains, the ancient lords of Dunluce."

In the fifteenth century, Mava (according to the old legend connected with the spot), a young girl of seventeen, was the only daughter of the Lord of Dunluce. Gentle and charitable, she rose at day-break, and went forth daily to relieve the wants of her father's poor dependents.

"Look at her!" said the shepherd, as they saw her pass along, "she is as bright as the spring sun, and fairer than the morning star."

But, alas! a handsome cavalier had met her several times in her walks. He had even spoken to her. Who was he? Mava had not discovered; she only knew him by the name of *he*. When she saw a bark glide slowly and secretly under the castle-walls,—she felt her heart beat.

"It is *he*!" she said. When, at eve, a distant voice was heard in the cliffs—"It is *he*!" she said,—"*He*!" That word said all. There is but one *he* in a woman's life.

The secret of her love was soon revealed to the Lord of Dunluce.

Macquillain, the proudest of chiefs, was the harshest of fathers. He vowed the year should not pass without her being married to the son of one of his powerful neighbours. "I will die first," thought the young girl, and anticipating, as it were, the sacrifice of her life, she began to prepare her shroud. Happiness could no longer be hers, since she could now be nothing to *him*.

Her father, one day, finding her sewing a white robe, asked her drily:

"Is that a bridal dress?"

"No, my father," answered she, "it is a shroud for my tomb."

"A shroud! We shall see that."

"Yes, father, you *shall* see it."

These words were uttered in a prophetic tone. Macquillain seemed troubled by them. Unfortunately Mava had no longer a mother to defend her against her father. The lord of the castle shaken in his determination, for an instant, persisted in it more firmly than ever. Convinced that he had exhausted all means of persuasion with his daughter, he tried what severity would effect.

The poor child, condemned henceforward to see no living thing, was shut up in one of the towers of Dunluce. Her food was thrust in through an opening in the wall: she herself was obliged to make her bed and sweep her chamber. She had nothing near her but the walls of her prison,—no hope, save the tomb; no support, but prayer. Mava, resigned to her fate, took her broom every evening and swept her chamber in silence.

"You have only to say one word," cried Macquillain, one day from without, "and I will restore you to liberty. Promise to wed the noble chief, whom I have destined to be your husband."

Mava made no answer.

"Speak! child. What is your resolution?"

"To sweep my chamber."

"For how long?"

"For ever!"

"Another dismal prophecy!" replied Macquillain. You think to frighten me with your sybil-line tone, but you will not succeed. Are you still making your shroud?"

"It is finished; you shall see it."

The lord of the castle began now to feel remorse; he was convinced that nothing would shake Mava's determination. Either he must yield or she must die. Paternal love was not extinct in his heart; fear revived the flame of his affection. He had but this one child: could he make up his mind to lose her? but the pride of the castellan spoke as loudly as the affection of the sire. To yield to his daughter, to confess himself conquered and to retract his sentence would be an unpardonable

weakness. He would be laughed at everywhere. Could he subject himself to such an indignity?

Macquillain had obtained exact information respecting Mava's lover. Reginald was of noble birth, brave, and well-connected; wealth alone was wanting. Enough. The castellan's resolution was taken. He would not yield to his daughter—he would not revoke his decision; but he would save his child.

One day, Mava, alone in her turret, holding her fatal broom, with her head leaning on the handle of this instrument of toil, was shedding bitter tears. On a sudden she heard the well-known sound of music of a harp through the bars of her window; the sounds came from a fisherman's skiff which lay alongside the shore. That morning she had seen her father leave the castle with an escort of soldiers. Armed *cap-a-pie*, he was doubtless gone on some expedition, and would not return for several days. Mava began anew to hope.

"That boat is *his*," said she; "*he* comes and I shall escape from this my prison by his means, and for him."

Alas! the sea began to swell; the wind to whistle menacingly, and peals of thunder rumbled from the darkening shades which were sweeping in fast from the ocean, almost drowning the sweet and clear chords of the minstrel in the boat, which had become the sport of the elements, and, ere long, was impelled by the hurricane to the foot of the rocks beneath the castle. Was it about to be dashed in pieces there? No; the brave hand that steered it braved the billows that assailed it in broken and impetuous fury. It glided in between the rocks, and was lost to view under the steep rock which overhung the cavern of the castle.

The captive scarcely breathed. What a surprise awaited her! A key turned in the lock of her prison; one of the servitors of the castle, in a brown cloak, advanced towards her:

"You shall be saved!" said he. "Follow me!"

"And *he*?" she asked.

"And he also."

"Whither must I go?"

"Under the cavern of the fort. He awaits you. Come quickly."

"I am ready."

Mava followed her guide, she learned from him that her lover, having procured information respecting the localities, had bribed the gaoler of the tower. Heaven seconded his designs.

Reginald perceived a glimmering light at the far end of the cavern. Mava advanced towards him, pale and trembling; her white dress torn by the rough projections of the cave; her feet wounded by the sharp pebbles which she had to traverse. What matter? She approached, she reached him.

Who could describe their transport. They forgot their dangers and their situation, their misfortunes and the storm. Years, trials, time and tide were all alike forgotten.

"Fly, fly, and speedily," exclaimed the gaoler.

The lovers quitted the cavern, and the frail boat emerged on the open stormy sea.

Thus did Mava leave her home.

* * * * *

From one of the windows of the fortress, a man completely armed watched the fugitives. This was none other than Macquillain. His departure had been only a feint, and during the storm, under cover of the darkness, he had re-entered the castle unperceived. He had himself arranged everything to facilitate his daughter's escape, and had played into Reginald's hands. The gaoler, who had opened the prison door, was the most devoted servant he possessed, and obeyed, while he appeared to betray him. Macquillain now felt confident of the success of his scheme. He rejoiced to have discovered the means of restoring life and happiness to his child, without having in any way sacrificed his pride. Circumstances alone had changed their positions; and Providence appearing to direct everything, his own *amour-propre* was saved. He could not take his eyes off the little boat, as he saw it disappearing in the darkness which was creeping over the view. The little white figure in the stern was the focus on which his eyes were immoveably fixed. The crests of the boiling waves showed themselves fearfully white against the dark hollow depths from which they rose.

"Alas!" said he to himself, "that I should be obliged thus to see my daughter driven from her father and her home, and myself the cause of it. Those two beings at this moment, think of nothing but their love. Night has no darkness, the storm no terrors for them. It matters not, I am content; Mava will forget me, I am resigned even to that; may she be happy—without me. I have saved her, but I weep for her!"

But a fearful retribution for his mistaken harshness was at hand. The tempest increased each moment in fury. The frail bark hurried along by the storm with resistless violence, now mounted to the summit, and now sank down in the abyss of waters beneath. No succour could be given; all was lost—hopelessly lost. The wretched father beheld with his own eyes the fate of his child, and it was he himself, it was his own blind pride, that had hurled her into the gulf. He perceived amid the flashes of lightning, his daughter on her knees in the boat with her hands raised to Heaven. The boat was perfectly unmanageable, and was being driven in towards the land, and must inevitably be dashed ere long upon the rocks. Reginald was doing his utmost to resist the fury of the waves, but even the agony of his position could not render his efforts of any avail against the cruel force of the remorseless ocean. Macquillain fancied he heard a mournful cry come upon the winds amid the howling and crashing of the hurricane; and thought he heard the words:

"My father!"

He saw the white figure throw up her hands, and dart towards Reginald, who panting and exhausted, was still manfully striving for what was dearer to him than his life. The little frail bark was again for one long moment distinguishable on the tops of the waves, the next was lost for ever in the whirl and vortex of the waters which yawned over it. It had dashed against the Skerries, and broken in a thousand pieces, had disappeared for ever from the scene.

At this dreadful moment, the castellan forgot all his pride and resolutions: he rushed from his retreat. He was heedless of all that might be thought or said. A father's love and anguish for the loss of an only child alone animated him. He would save his daughter before all things, at the price of his fortune, his reputation, and his life. His daughter! All else was nothing to him.

"Dunluce, and half my wealth to him who will restore my child to me," he shrieked, in paroxysms of despair. Alas! that even gold should be so powerless!

The servants of the castle ran down in numbers to the foot of the White Rocks, opposite the Skerries, many of them with torches. They had boats, and ropes, and were aided by sailors and divers, who feared neither sea nor storm; but hell itself seemed to have risen against the lovers of Dunluce. The boats were driven back on the shore, and shattered upon the rocks, the sailors and swimmers were swallowed up by the waves. The flashes of lightning ceased to play, now that their glare might have assisted in showing something of the position of the unfortunate victims, but the storm still continued. Macquillain wringing his hands, and tearing his hair, would fain have plunged into the sea.

"But an instant ago she lived," he cried, "and then I said I weep for her! Oh! I knew not what it was to weep; Mava! my child—my life."

Yet one more ray of hope. A man was seen swimming towards the shore; he bore along with him the figure in white. It was Reginald and Mava. He was redoubling his efforts in the struggle, when a frightful wave met him; it struck the unhappy lover, and hurled him against a rock; his skull was fractured—

On the following day, at early dawn, the body of Reginald was found on the strand, between the White Rocks and Portrush. As for the virgin of Dunluce, she had disappeared for ever. The sea never restored its victim.

Macquillain, almost mad with grief, wandered frequently along the shore, calling upon the name of his daughter. One day he was passing beneath the tower, where his captive had shed so many tears. He raised his head. Oh! strange vision. He fancied he beheld Mava at the bars of her window. She had her broom in her hand, and was clad in a shroud.

Bereft of reason, he cried:—

"For how long?"

"For ever."

And the figure with her eyes fixed on Macquillain, continued sweeping. She showed him her shroud. He fancied he heard the words:—

"It is finished: you see it."

Since that time, at a particular hour, the sweeper of the turret never ceased to appear, cleaning her room, as of old, in spite of all obstacles.

She became the Banshee of the Macquillain family, and always appeared before the death of any of the family.

The Banshee has ceased to appear, for she can no longer announce death to the Macquillains. Her broom alone keeps constantly moving, and this is to last for ever.

R. V. P.

in Carmelite robes, with ropes round their waists, receive travellers, and sell them rosaries and other trifles, forage for their donkeys, and wine for themselves. Their habitation is like that of the Kenites, in the living rock, hollowed partly by nature, partly by art, and furnished with glazed windows and chimneys—not unnecessarily, for it must be very cold up here sometimes. There is no appearance of a crater. The eruptions all seem to have broken out lower down, on the sides of the mountain, as has been the case with Etna for the last thousand years or so. In descending by another road we crossed a tremendous torrent of lava, perhaps a couple of miles wide at the shore. Though this, the latest, eruption took place A.D. 1302 there is not, as yet, the slightest appearance of vegetation on the desert it has created. The lava is as black and harsh as if evolved only a few months ago, and it is difficult to believe that the day will ever come when the olive and vine will flourish again here, “as they have done already on the more ancient streams,” said our guide.

This was the man who had accompanied *l'egregio pittore Inglese*, whom he designated as “questo Fil.” When asked how he supposed the name to be spelt, he wrote *Ste* as the Christian name, and *Fil* as the patronymic; and, in spite of our explanations, persisted in thinking his the best way. He questioned us very much about the standing of this distinguished artist in the profession in England, and the prices his pictures fetched. The sums I mentioned took away his breath. At first he evidently thought I was playing on his credulity, and when convinced that we were in earnest he made a pious ejaculation, fell into a brown study, and was in low spirits for the rest of the day. I suppose he was regretting that he had not made more out of him while in his service. He recovered himself sufficiently to take a slight interest in a sketch from Monte Tabor, which, he said, was “quite as like” as those *Ste-Fil* had made. How much should I get for mine?

I answered that I should probably not find a buyer, even if I wished to sell; but that I did not, and drew only for my amusement—a confession which evidently sunk me considerably in his estimation. We took advantage of this last halt on our way to embark at Ischia to settle with our donkey-men and the guide. The latter, however, walked down with us to the boat, and on his way privately presented Jingo with a half-piastre, begging I would return it to him again as I went aboard.

Though we could not imagine the meaning of this manœuvre, we did as he desired, supposing it to be some superstition about *luck*. To our astonishment, the man went through a complete pantomime of discontent, disgust, and expostulation, as we pushed off, and with eloquent gestures showing the money to those about him, flung it disdainfully down. The word of the charade was this. The guides make a sort of guild here, and share, or profess to share, their gains in common. This rogue, therefore, after pocketing secretly our ample donation, went through the farce to which we had so unwittingly lent ourselves, in order to

cheat his brethren out of their share. There is not even honour among thieves here, it would seem.
L. COURTENAY.

THE LOTS UPON THE RAFT.

SOME years ago I happened to be wind-bound in the port of L—. A furious westerly gale had set in at the full of the moon, and raged with a violence which can be appreciated only by those “who go down to the sea in ships,” and “behold the wonders of the deep.”

Right heartily did our hardy crew enjoy the shelter of that quaint old haven; grouped around their cheerful, cosy fore-castle, the caboose giving forth a merry, homely, social blaze, they yarned away of by-gone dangers and hair-breadth escapes, which caused the older seamen to shake their heads in grave attestation of the narrators' truth, and the green boys to listen with open-mouthed wonder, thinking, and perchance hoping, that the day might come when they too should be enabled to relate similar wonders of maritime adventure.

The hurricane whistled wildly through the rigging; great sheets of surge, beaten into foam-froth over the rough breastwork of rocks under whose shelter we lay, were whirled aloft through the spars, showing against the black scud that careered above, like clouds of snowdrift flying through the pines on a dark mountain side.

From boyhood I have been a lover of Nature, in calm and in storm, in smiling peacefulness and dire wrath; by land and by sea have I studied her beauties; but of all the scenes I love to dwell upon is that of the sea when lashed into wild fury by the roaring tempest.

Such a scene had I now before me; in the bottom, or rather, as a sailor would call it, the “bight” of a deep bay, lay the little haven of L—, securely sheltered by a massive breakwater of granite rock; on the right, as you looked seaward, the margin was defined by rugged precipices and outlying cliffs, whilst the left hand side was bounded by a chain of lofty mountains; obliquely up this bay was now raging a south-westerly gale, hurling the giant waves of the broad Atlantic into confused masses of foaming broken water; ever and anon tremendous squalls would sweep down the hill sides with resistless force, marking their paths by dense masses of smoke-like mist torn from the mighty surges that rolled along in solemn grandeur, until broken by crag and cliff and solid rock wall, they roared a dull great roar of impotent rage, as though they would shake earth's foundations, and open a passage to the ravaging waters. Turning from the fierce battle of the elements that raged without, the peaceful security of the well-sheltered little harbour, our own good little ship looking so neat and trim, as if hugging herself in the enjoyment of such good quarters, the merry voices and jocund laugh that occasionally resounded from her decks, formed such a picture of war and peace, that being lost in silent contemplation, I was not aware of a companion until a light touch upon the arm, and the gruff tones of our tough old pilot, Murtagh Moriarty, smote upon my ear

"Hardy weather, hardy weather, yer honer," exclaimed Murtagh, ducking his head as he spoke, to avoid a sheet of foam that arched over the rocky parapet.

"Ay, ay, pilot; for the poor fellows outside, it's rough and wild work indeed!"

"Troth, id just is what yer honer says,—wicked, wild, cruel work; an' shure id makes one's heart bleed for thim poor coasters that's sint to say in sich wild winthery weather, an' wid vessels ill-found, wid ropes as ould and as rotten as haybands; short manned, too, the way they may bring long profits to their naygur-hearted owners; ay, in troth, yer honer, many is the brave-hearted stout sayman that has had to give in whin human nathur couldn't stand agin hardships that id break a frame uv iron; an', eh Lord a mercy, sir dear! isn't id cruel wringin' to a sthrong man's sperit, whin he finds himself in the pride uv his prime, an' health and sthringth, sowld maybe to save a few fathoms uv rope or a few feet uv new plank; an' hurryin' on in the broad light uv day agin the tall cliffs that stan' up like a tombstone forninst him, wid his white shroud bilin' up an' roarin' all round him!"

"Sail ho! a sail, Mithur Moriarty! A sail, Murtagh jewel!" exclaimed two or three fishermen who had joined us.

We peered anxiously to seaward, and in the intervals of the drift and mist, just under the lofty cliffs, and almost within the broad belt of snowy breakers that foamed at their base, was a gallant ship under close-reefed topsails and courses, staggering under the pressure of the latter, as if carried on with a reckless desperation akin to despair, in order to extricate her from the fearful position into which over confidence or the thick haze of rain and surge had betrayed her.

"God be marcful! Bud by the living —"

Whatever else the old pilot would have said died upon his lips; a mighty wall of waters came rolling down upon the hapless bark just as she was about to clear the point of greatest danger; for a moment she wavered on her course, as though her helmsman was paralysed at the appalling peril; it was, however, for a moment only; again she lay over to the hurricane squall, until all her broad decks were visible; there was a great sheet of hissing surge boiling out from under her lee bow, which showed the tremendous velocity with which her desperate crew were forcing her through the broken water; gallantly, coolly, and with stern resolve she was held on that fearful course, as if gathering up her speed and her strength for the last great struggle to escape destruction. Already was the towering mass upon her, another moment and she would be rolled broadside on into that seething caldron, a mass of riven planks and timbers, the chaos of despair, of death! We held our breaths in torturing anticipation of what was to follow; already the cry of the strong swimmers in their agony seemed resounding in our ears; no mortal hand could help, no human aid could reach them. Suddenly her helm was put down; as she came up in the wind the thunder of her shivering canvas sounded like the knell of doom; she lifted buoyantly to the giant sea, rose upon its

advancing crest, as if with the last great effort of exhausted strength, burst through the curling ridge of white foam, and, falling off on the other tack, disappeared from our fevered gaze in a column of spray-smoke, and rain-mist.

"Bravely done! Bravely and well done!" shouted old Moriarty, in intense excitement. "Ay—ay—by my sowl, the child that sails her is no chicken! He knows every shtick in her timper, too, or he'd never thry such a divil's thrick as that wid her. If a rope yarn failed him, his sperit id be on the road to glory now. The Lord be praised for his marcy in sparin' them! Ids down on ther knees they ought to be this blessed minit?"

"Th'er no strangers here any how, Murtagh!"

"Thru for you, Billy Duncan, alanna, ay, indeed, that th'er not; here she comes now, squared away afore the wind; but my ould eyes are so mildewed wid the say dhrift, that I can't make out what she is at all!"

"Whisht, boys, whisht! Spake aisy, can't you? Ye'll know what she is now. Don't ye see who's comin' along the pier?"

All eyes were turned from the rapidly approaching vessel, in the direction indicated by the speaker. A tall and stately looking female was striding along the rugged causeway, heedless alike of the furious tempest or the pitiless peltings of rain and spray. She was clothed in garments of rusty black, which barely sufficed to cover her poor weak frame, much less to protect her from the inclemency of the elements. In the hard-drawn lines of her aged and care-worn features, could be traced the vestiges of early and wondrous beauty—the wreck of one of earth's fairest flowers. A look of patient suffering strangely contrasted with the expression of her bright dark eyes, from which a baleful, almost ferocious, fire gleamed fitfully. Her hands were clasped with feverish energy, as if in earnest, ceaseless supplication: her gaze wandered not: it was fixed upon the approaching ship. She moved through pointed rocks, and across yawning chasms, like a being of another world. Ever and anon her lips moved, as if in prayer, yet she spoke to none, nor seemed to be aware of the presence of a human being. The moment she gained the lighthouse platform she knelt at its margin, lonely, sad, and weird looking, swaying her body backwards and forwards, her hands raised in prayer. Her voice now rose in incoherent murmurings, and anon died away; but the same intensely vengeful light gleamed ever from her eyes.

"Letty Blair, God help her!" exclaimed old Murtagh. "If I was Black Will Gardiner, I'd sooner my bones were washing under yon cliffs than face such a welkim as this ather every ry'ice!"

"For Heaven's sake, Murtagh! what is the meaning of all this? Surely the poor creature must be mad: she will die from such exposure. Let us remove her to shelter and warmth."

"Hist, yer honer, hist! it's poor Letty Blair. She's goin' to curse Black Will Gardiner, the skipper of the Gipsy Bride."

Meanwhile, the vessel which had caused all this excitement had drawn nigh, and her bowsprit now appeared as she rounded the pier end, in such close proximity

stepped on to her bulwarks. Usually, when a vessel returns to her port after a voyage, there are those at hand to give the tempest-tossed mariners a cheery welcome home. Some few stragglers had joined us, but, save an odd cry of recognition, her dripping and startled-looking crew were grouped forward in sullen silence: no joyous outburst welcomed the wanderers of the deep; no triumphant cheer acknowledged the gallant battle for life that had been fought and won. No: a deep and ominous gloom appeared to hang over the ship and her crew. At this moment the appearance and movements of the captain of the Gipsy Bride arrested my attention. He was a man in the prime of life, of colossal stature, powerful and athletic frame, but withal of a stern, gloomy, and forbidding aspect; and if ever the face of man gave index of the mind, his might be read without envy. His swarthy features were convulsed in a manner fearful to behold: hatred, rage, fear, despair, all the evil passions which crime entails upon its followers, reigned in turn: the veins upon his forehead stood out like knotted rope yarns; his powerful grasp clutched at everything within reach as though he fevered to grapple with a deadly foe. The struggle for mastery over his feelings were terrible. The short quick walk along the quarter-deck ceased the moment he caught sight of that kneeling woman. He stood glaring like some ferocious beast about to spring upon his prey. A howl of torture—the pent-up cry of racking mental agony—burst from his lips. It increased into a half-shriek, half-roar. His hand shook like a man's with ague, as, pointing to the form which bent over him from the rocky platform, like that of an avenging angel, with a burst of fearful imprecations, he thundered forth:

"Eternal fires! will no one strike that old hag from my sight!"

It was a solemn sight, accompanied by fearful sounds! That ship and her crew just gliding into the safe and sheltered haven, escaped as by a marvel of Providence from a horrible death, and instead of voices upraised in glad thanksgiving for mercy vouchsafed, to hear that awful shout of ribald blasphemy rising high above the roaring of the sea and the howling of the wind! And then that weird-looking kneeling woman, wrapped in her graveyard garments of woe, muttering forth incoherent ejaculations, in which invocations of Heaven's wrath were strangely mingled with supplications for mercy! The visitation that destroyeth the body and the soul was prayed for in the same breath as the exemption of the innocent from the doom of the guilty! By the night or by the day, in the calm or in the storm, by the land or by the sea, sleeping or waking, in health or in sickness, that "the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is never quenched," might prey upon the spirit, blast the hope, wither the strong frame, and dry up the life's blood of William Gardiner—the outcast of God and of man!

The close of that eventful day saw the storm unabated, the good ship the Gipsy Bride safely moored, her captain bestowed wherever his evil spirit could best find a resting-place; the mysterious visitant of the pier, I trust, where her

broken heart and fevered mind were lulled into forgetfulness of the terrible past, and myself awaiting the pilot and his promised yarn; at length, having satisfied his craving for a pipe of Maryland, he made his appearance aft.

"I'm thinking yer honer is aiger to hear the story of poor Letty Lorimer?"

"Perhaps, Murtagh, your memory, like an old hat, would be refreshed by damping!" handing him as I spoke a stiff compound of Admiral Vernon's favourite mixture.

"Ough-ah!" coughed the old pilot, making the cabin to resound again, "bedad, its curious yer honer, that two of uz should be thinking the same thing!"

"Now, then, pilot!" I exclaimed, "to develope this mystery that has puzzled me all day."

"Ay, yer honer. It's now many a long year since ould Clement Lorimer was a big man, an' a sthrong shipowner in this same port of L—. He owned ships that wint to a great many places beyant the say, an' his word was as good as another man's bond. Well, Clement had a daughter, the poor wake craythur yer honer seen to-day, an' och! weary me! ids myself that remembers poor Letty Lorimer, the purtiest Colleen Dhas that every tossed a spidthers-web from a grass-brake on a May mornin', an' becoorse all the gay young chaps about these parts used to be cocking their caubeens at her, but Letty id have none of 'em; she was grand-like in her idayies, an' was given to readin' about great men that wint across the says, an' med great fortins. Well, there were two apprentices sint to ould Clement—the sons of marchints he used to have dalins wid—one was a fine dashin' young Scotchman, none uv yer hard-lined, skin-the-cat sort of chaps, bud a great, big-hearted, jovial chap; och! shure, they said he was descinded from the great King Robert the Bruce; anyhow no matther who was at the beginning of him, he was a raale fine, handsome, slashin' sailor, an' no two ways about him; to'ther fellow, they said, was a side-wind from Spain, bud he'd an English name at all events, an' was a great big-limbed, dark-lookin' customer,—morose and self-given like—nobody fancied him, but bonny Donald Blair was in everybody's mouth; an' the way he'd dance the reel of Tullogorum, an' sing the Laird o' Co'pen, bedad it id bring the tears into yer eyes wid fair delight. William Gardiner was ould Lorimer's favourite, at all events; whether his people had more money nor Donald's nobody knew rightly, bud people said that Letty was to be married to him whin he was out uv his time. Ther's always two voices to a bargain, and although Letty wasn't much consulted at first, bedad she was daytermined she'd have her own way; so the very day Donald Blair was out uv his time the two uv them sets off an' gets married hard an' fast, an' may-be there wasn't the devil's own rookaun about it; however, Clement, sinsible-like, med the best uv the bargain his daughter got, an' had them home, an' daycently married, an' a powerful jollification ther' was; everybody got dhrunk uv coorse, for Donald was such a favourite that nobody envied him but one, that one was Will Gardiner; next or near the weddin' he never kem, but was black

and sulky as a chained bear. I'm told t'was dhreadful, to hear the oaths he swore about the revenge he'd take on Donald Blair.

"Clement Lorimer, to make up wid him like, gev him the command uv one uv his best ships, an' to show that there was no ill-will betwixt nor between them, he sent Donald Blair out as chief mate: she was as fine a barque as ever yer honer clapped eyes on, oh! a raale beauty, called the Carlo Zeno: that was a woful vy'ige for Donald, poor, light-hearted, gay, Donald Blair, he never kem back; he was logged as washed over-

board in a squall off the Great Piton Rocks, near the island of Saint Lucia; there was whisperins uv foul play, but Will Gardiner challenged 'em all, an' as the log was found all square, an' the crew spoke up, why there the thing ended.

"Not wid poor Letty, though; the poor craythur! she never lifted her head from that day; an' the poor ould masther, too, wid all Donald's wild ways was fond uv him, for who wouldn't; the poor lad was as honest an' open-hearted as the light uv day, only fond uv his joke, an' his divarshun, small blame to him, ids a sorry sowl that



goes through the world without rubbing a few bright spots in id.

"In the coorse of time the widow Blair became a mother; an' if ever the dead came to life again the father did in that boy, only he had the mother's beauty an' all her winnin' ways to the back of all poor Donald's dash an' bravery; he grew fast, an' ould Clement began to regard him as the apple uv his eye, couldn't bear him out uv his sight for a minit; bud the dark times wor at hand, things began to go cross wid the poor ould masther,—first one ship was wracked, thin another, until, at last, the only one he had left was the Carlo Zeno.

"Well, the time kem when something must be done, wid young Donald—he'd no longer his grandfather to look to, so bedad the heritage uv his poor drowned father was bestowed upon him—and he was sint to sarve his time wid Will Gardiner: oh! but that was a sorry partin', for Cle-

ment Lorimer had parted wid his last ship to him, an' in sending his darlin' grandson wid him id seemed like a last hope that he'd bring back the fortune that was gone. Many, many was the requests he made uv Will that he'd behave to his poor boy, an' do by him what he had done for Will Gardiner to make him an honest sailor, an' a Christian man. That same night Black Will, as we always called him, had a long talk with Mrs. Blair, an' he asked her the question that had been the aim an' object of his life; he asked her to be his wife, an' to forget all she had ever loved as only a woman can love—once; but he spoke uv him that was dead and gone, of the man with whom he'd broken the same bread, and drunk the same cay as a ne'er-do-well that desarved to be forgotten: little knowin', the black-hearted villain! the woman he had to dale wit! Oh, my jewel! it was Letty that up an' gev him her mind, and he

left her that night wid the scowl upon his brow and the curse upon his lips.

"More nor a year passed away, and still no news uv the Carlo Zeno. The poor mother was well nigh distracted, and as for ould Clement, he was fairly beside himself. At last, one fine day, who should come back, as if the finger uv Fate was on him, but Black Will himself, and nobody else wid the exception of Art Sullivan, a very ould man, who was carpenter of the ship; she had foundered at say—the crew escaped on a raft; but, after days of awful sufferin', the only two that were picked off that fatal raft was himself and the carpenter.

"The measure of poor Clement Lorimer's bitterness was now full; he had seen ships and money and everything pass away from him, and now the only being that bound him to earth, that his poor old wearied heart clung to, the fair golden-haired laughin' boy, whose presence was like sunshine to him, and whose life was wrapt up in his own, he was gone too, and all the world was black and dreary to him. He longed for rest, the rest that knows no brakin' 'til the last day comes, and the poor broken-hearted desolate sowl was not long findin' it. We laid him in his last restin'-place, an' all that remained of the once great ship-master was a narrow grave and a plain little headstone; and poor Letty was left in solitary widowhood to mourn the days that wor past—too happy to be lastin' and too fletin' to be true.

"The little that was left her she spent in charity and preparin' herself for the home where those she loved best had gone before her.

"Well, yer honer, one night Letty was tould that a dyin' man wanted to make his peace wid the world, and that he should see her.

"'Do you know me?' says he to her whin she wint into the wretched cabin, where he was lyin' on a lock uv sthraw.

"'You're Art Sullivan!' says she, 'a faithful servant of my poor father's.'

"'Ay, God help me, Miss Letty!' says he; 'I was once honest, an' had a clear conscience, bud for that black villain Will Gardiner!' says he.

"'What about him? What of him?' says she. 'Oh! Art Sullivan, asthore machree! if you know anything of my poor lost boy—as you are now about to appear before your Judge—tell me!'

"'Listen, my poor Colleen!' says he. 'Listen—'twas for that I sint for you. Whin we escaped on the raft young Donald was safe and sound, and so wor' all the crew, but we had days and nights of awful sufferin'—hunger and thirst and the killin' heat by day soon sent most of them mad, and they jumped into the say, where the sharks made short work of them, and the rest died of fair starvation. At last, none were left but Will Gardiner, myself, and young Donald Blair. Oh! but he was a brave fine boy! he kept our spirits goin', day by day, and bid us cheer up, although the poor darlin's bones wor' peepin' thro' his skin. That terrible man had a little store of rum and biscuit, for I kept my eye on him night an' day, and when he knew I had discovered him, he g^{ave} me a taste now and then, but never a morsel for a sup would he give the brave child that was dyin' before his face. I took

it, and I tried to make the little Donald swallow some; but no, he had the sperit of a lion, "No!" he used to whisper, and his little eyes would flash, "What the black rascal would not give to the poor men that's gone shall never pass my lips!" It was a just rebuke to myself, a big man, to hear that from the lips of a child; but I was wake and feeble, and the great black thief was sthrong thro' his own cowardly selfishness—so, what could I do? When a man is driven to death by inches, he craves for life more than ever—pride, manliness, everything is wake in him; but that boy was a hero, if ever there was one born. At last the day came that all was gone; another and another followed, and Black Will Gardiner stooped over me and whispered a horrid timptation, for, says he, "if we can only prolong life a couple of days more, we'll be sure to fall in wid some of the homeward-bounders!" My blood curdled at his words; but as the day wore on, and no sign uv a sail, he spoke to me again; but I swore at him, and he swore at and cursed me, and called me a drivellin' old fool to cant about mercy to a worthless brat. I wondther now he did not throw me overboard, but the coward was afraid of his conscience—he feared being alone. At last, he spoke out bold, and said the time was come we should draw lots for life, one must die to keep the others alive. The lots were drawn, and, God forgive him and me! *the lots were drawn falsely*, and poor little Donald—Oh! God shield that sight from my memory!—there was that arch-demon struggling wid that poor small child. I screamed; I tried to rise and help and save him; but no, I was feeblor than he was, and at last the blow was struck; ay, God forgive him, that man-devil! he murdered poor little Donald—he drank of his blood and he eat of his flesh, and he forced it upon me, too, and bound me by fearful oaths never to reveal what I do now, but I could not die aisy. Oh, mercy! mercy, Miss Letty! I am goin'—I am——' The wild cry alone answered, the spirit of the old man had fled, and with it the senses of poor Letty Blair."

"And is it possible, Murtagh?" I exclaimed, "that nothing has ever been done about this?"

"'God bless yer honer!' said the old man, 'what could we do?' Letty told me the story herself in a few odd clear moments she had after the first shock passed away, bud then she got worse than ever. Our only witness was dead, and who would take a man's life on the word of a poor crazed woman? Bud his day will come, yer honer—sooner or later! The finger is on him, sure an' fixed! He tried sailin' from other ports, bud he always comes back to this. Bud tell me, yer honer,' said the old man with intense eagerness, 'do you believe in the appearance of sperits from the other world?'

"Why do you ask the question?"

"'Because poor Letty often wandthers by the sayside, and says that she is talking to little Donald; and thin she kneels down beside old Clement's grave, and whispers to him to be of good cheer, that little Donald is comin' to him, and that she is comin' too, but that she must wait for Will Gardiner; and, sure enough, when we see her doin' this, we know he is not far off; and

let it be by day or by night that he comes back, there she kneels upon that platform of rock—the first that he sees whin he comes, and the last whin he goes away. God forgive her poor wanderin' broken sperit, it's not Christian-like, but shure she knows no better—she asks for her poor lost son—once the pride of the heart that shall never bloom again, the light of the eyes that shall never sparkle more but in madness. Terrible will be the fate of the man that wrongs the widowed and the fatherless !' ”

The old pilot ceased, and I shall do the same, good reader. I tell you the tale as it was told to me ; and, for aught I know, the poor maniac mother may still frequent the little pier of L——, and Black Will Gardiner may still be prosperous ; but, as sure as the old pilot said it, his day will come.

I need hardly say that the names I have introduced are not the real ones. W. C.
